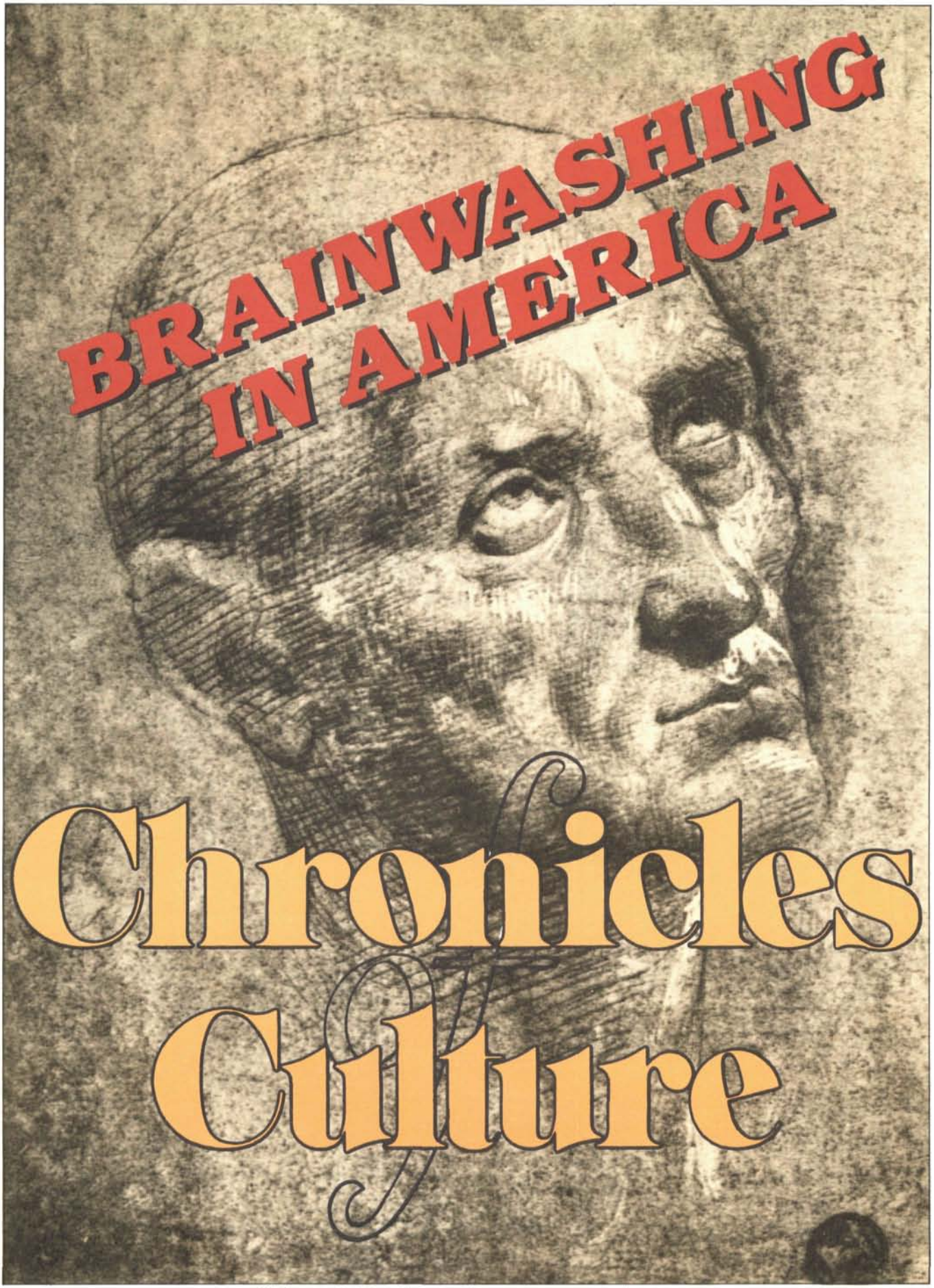

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Brainwashing in America

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COMMENT

The term *brainwashing* came into the English language from Chinese during the Korean War to describe the bizarre combination of torture and indoctrination used by the Chinese as they tried to convert prisoners of war to communism. With constant repetition, harassment, and humiliation, Chinese-communist political officers attempted to persuade their victims to believe such notions as "the Soviet Union heads the World Peace Camp." One wonders where those officers are now, and what they are doing. This brainwashing proved a lot more effective at killing Westerners than at converting them, but it also produced an utter collapse of the prisoners' morale. In a few cases, particularly airmen whom they wanted to confess to dropping germ bombs, the communists were more successful. As Doctor Charles Mayo wrote, intense pressures were brought to bear that were "calculated to disintegrate the victim's mind, to distort his sense of values to a point where he will not simply cry out 'I did it,' but will become a seemingly willing accomplice to the complete destruction of his integrity."

But brainwashing—in America? Some might swear that there is no such thing. True, it is illegal to torture someone for thirty-six hours straight to break down his personality and his beliefs. However, it is perfectly clear that less-extreme types of manipulation are widely used to promote the dominant left-liberal beliefs—by the mass media, by the academic world, and by various other opinion-makers. Repetition and a certain style of humiliation and harassment for opponents of their views not only are not unknown, they are well-honed tools. Sometimes their results are similar to those achieved in Korea. Most Americans have not unconditionally surrendered to the beliefs of the minority who run the information and entertainment industries, but it is apparent that a collapse of moral and behavioral norms *has* taken place over the last 20 years—aided, it must be admitted, by other events. In some cases, the targets of concentrated attack have indeed had their integrity destroyed, and have run around screaming, "I did it." The parade of clergymen advocating policies of surrender to totalitarianism is a case in point. By 1971, Norman Podhoretz was able to observe that the American middle class routinely said about itself what its *worst enemies* had once said of it.

American brainwashing's most potent tool is relentless repetition, and in this field Americans have far surpassed the original crude practitioners of the art. Television and weekly news magazines provide far more effective and flexible means of mental bombardment than anything possessed by the Chinese Reds in the early 1950's. Instead of being hammered by the same tinny slogan over and over again, the victim is hit repeatedly with the same ideas and attitudes in many and varied forms, from newspapers like the *Washington Post* to message-laden situation comedies like *M*A*S*H* and the various vulgar offspring of the Norman Lear school of consciousness. The primary methods of brainwashing can be found both in "straight" reporting and in "fiction." These methods are the slant, exclusion of debate, the assumption of agreement where none exists, semantic infiltration, and the unadmitted redefinition of terms.

Biased reporting has always been with us; indeed, only a generation or two ago, it was the ostensibly "rightist" papers, like the Hearst chain and the *Chicago Tribune,* that were the acknowledged masters of slanted reporting in America. (The *Chicago Tribune,* however, lost none of its skill when it changed to an editorial line that must have Colonel McCormick spinning in his grave.) But the presentation of one-sided versions of events and deliberate emotional coloring has been highly polished since those early days. Television news in particular has learned to express and to capitalize on the contemporary tendency to live wholly in the present, discarding not only tradition but even memory. A good example of this was the treatment of the Israeli military campaign in southern Lebanon. There was a deluge of highly emotional accounts about the destruction caused by Israeli forces, but no mention of the seven years of hell that the PLO and its friends had inflicted on Lebanese Christians, nor any recognition of the raids on Israel which provoked their arguably belated retaliation. Without memory there can be no perspective, no real grasp of reality. What often passes on television as references to history often turns out to be nothing more than stimuli designed to elicit a specific emotional response, a response that has been conditioned over time to become almost Pavlovian. And it is Pavlov whose work was appropriated by his communist enemies to form the scientific basis for brainwashing.

But the most decisive factor in American brainwashing, the one that threatens to overturn the foundations of the English language and all but wreck our ability even to see reali-

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ty, much less deal with it, is the complete distortion of the meanings of words. Semantic infiltration is the introduction of new terminology which conveys not only a meaning but also an emotional impact designed to further the opinion-maker's ideology. The most common example is the use of the word "gay" to designate homosexuals, thus presenting them in a more favorable light. (The mass media did not invent this term, but without their acceptance and continuous use of it, "gay" would never have become widely used.) The use of this lighthearted friendly word, with its wealth of happy associations, to describe sexual deviation may well go down in history as a masterstroke of brainwashing, American-style. Semantic infiltration can also occur at several levels simultaneously, as when in the academe homosexuality is described as "sexual preference."

For some purposes—usually unpopular ones—it is necessary for the brainwashers to introduce terms which have neither emotional impact nor even any intelligible meaning. One fine example of this is the invention of the term "affirmative action" to describe *approved* forms of racial discrimination. Yet another brainwashing technique is the redefinition of terms either to narrow or to expand their meaning in order to blur traditional distinctions. An admirably clever example of this, one well adapted to seizing the moral high ground in any debate, was the renaming of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Welfare had become a worn-out word, laden with all sorts of unpleasant connotations, so the bureaucrats renamed their department "Health and Human Services" —ingeniously implying that their organization, evidently alone in the government, was performing "human services."

On the whole, however, it is the mass media that can be counted on to be the champions at this particular game, and a favorite play is to inflate the meanings of words. "Execution," for example, has been deprived of its association with legal capital punishment; when someone is murdered by terrorists or gangsters, the media often describes this as an execution—at one stroke public outrage at the crime is softened and the idea of capital punishment is subtly discredited. Words like "militant," "guerrilla," and "ghetto" have been deprived of anything resembling their original meanings. "Guerrilla"—once used to designate irregular military forces—now is applied to any terrorist, and even to regular military forces occupying a foreign country. The word "ghetto" is now so broadly applied that the whole history and nature of relations between ethnic groups in our country has been hopelessly obfuscated.

The principal aim of American brainwashing is to distort our sense of reality by destroying the English language as it has normally been understood and to substitute a set of conditioned responses for memory. Its effectiveness is beyond question. The atmosphere in which public discourse is conducted in the United States has already markedly deteriorated, and it will continue to do so unless something is done. With this deterioration, the disintegrative forces in our society will continue to prosper. It is for our language that we are fighting—which means, in the end, that we are defending our brains and our very lives.

—Alan J. Levine

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Social Register

As metaphor, "Vanity Fair" comes from *Pilgrim's Progress,* where it stands for the sinful rapacity of earthly aspirations. As the title of Thackaray's novel, it becomes a refined condemnation of the torments of greed and sophisticated snobberies. As the title of a celebrated publication of the 1920's, *Vanity Fair* meant what it was: a trading mart for café-society gossip, interspersed with some good writing by people of letters who were endowed with a knack for light penmanship and a taste for the minor joys of life; plenty of vainglory and *amour-propre* floated through its pages, and both the ethics and the vicissitudes of social climbing were treated seriously.

We are about to witness the rebirth of *Vanity Fair* as a magazine, revived by those masters of cultural maquillage, the archcosmeticians of social mendacity, the superdermatologists of psychic acne—Condé Nast Publications. The liberal press is already running promotional ads, one of which sports pop-litterateur John Irving in a wrestler's costume; apparently that garp is supposed to define what the new *Vanity Fair* will be all about—protruding masculinity. Mr. Irving looks less like a wrestler and more like a fashion model for Greco-Roman athletics: the body covered with fake perspiration, firm determination on his face, under a coiffure meticulously arranged to feign a postfight disarray. Which convinces us that the forthcoming *Vanity Fair* will provide sustenance for the self-admiration of the lowbrow, and that the distinction between vanity and discount narcissism is not very clear to its publishers and editors.

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The Capitalism-Democracy-Freedom Debate

Michael Novak: *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism;* American Enterprise Institute/Simon & Schuster; New York.

by Thomas Fleming

Capitalism must be dead at last. Its demise has been predicted so many times—by Marx and his disciples, by fascists, and even by true believers like the ex-Trotskyist James Burnham—that many of us have come to regard the free market as we would a wealthy, valetudinarian uncle who takes his own sweet time in dying. There are many indications that we are on the other side of some great transition from capitalist democracy to what Burnham called the Managerial Society and Belloc named the Servile State. Some form of socialism is dominant in nearly every nation of Europe and Asia, while in the United States, despite the "Reagan revolution," bureaucrats, unelected judges, and what is still "the best Congress money can buy" continue to govern this land in the conspiracy of whimsy and red tape we have come to expect since the 1860's. But the most conclusive evidence for the death of capitalist democracy are the eulogies that have been pouring forth on behalf of the dear departed: Irving Kristol's *Two Cheers for Capitalism,* the Friedmans' *Free to Choose,* and George Gilder's *Wealth and Poverty* have all sung the praises of our dear old liberal institutions.

Last year Gilder became the toast of conservative think tanks by explaining the moral basis of capitalism, whose roots—he discovered—lie not in greed but in altruism. This year Michael Novak has outdone Gilder by promulgating a "theology of economics," the culmination of his latest work, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism.*

It must be said that there are few journalists who could have attempted a defense of capitalism on religious grounds. Novak's mind has been disciplined in the hard, uncapitalist schools of European Catholic philosophy. Despite the handicap of a decent education, Novak has evolved into one of the best political columnists writing in America. He is practically the only well-known political commentator—on the right or the left—who can be relied upon to look beneath the deceptive surface of an event

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Mr. Fleming is editor of Southern Partisan.

by Edward J. Lynch

In *The English Constitution,* Walter Bagehot remarked that if you wanted to give the people a government that they would understand you would have to give them a monarchy. Average folks, he believed, could understand the simple ideas of direct orders and execution, with responsibility flowing from one particular office. Bagehot contended that the complexities of democracy—with responsibility spread around different offices, separations of powers, checks and balances—transcended the average man's capacity for understanding. People might be governed in a democracy, he realized, but few among them would ever truly understand the institutions through which it controlled their lives.

Today, socialism might be described as the economist's parallel to Bagehot's perception of monarchy. In the economic realm, people understand the ideas of command and control that are the basis of socialist economics. Some observers even claim that the essence of a socialist economy can be described in fifteen minutes. Capitalism, like democracy, is considerably more complex and well suited to people who desire to exercise control over their own lives, even if they never understand how the overall system operates. A desire for simple explanations and instant solutions must be a contributing factor to one of the intellectual mysteries of the 20th century. Despite the simplicity of the socialist idea, its performance in practice has been dismal. Although perhaps few can completely understand the ideas behind capitalism, most observers can readily see that capitalist economies produce an abundance of the material goods that most people desire. Yet when modern economic systems are evaluated, capitalist economies are commonly criticized in terms of socialist ideals. Socialist systems, in contrast, are rarely, if ever, evaluated in terms of the ideas of democratic capitalism. Many capitalists, viewing the wealth that their system has produced, develop a sense of guilt: capitalism allegedly originates in human selfishness. Even Adam Smith never contended that benevolence inspired the farmer to supply wheat to the baker. Self-interest served as the practical starting point for free enterprise. Some partisans of capitalism have sought to elevate selfishness into a virtue, but such defenses have never gained much intellectual respect. A moral appreciation of any system must look beyond its material results toward the ends to which those material benefits are directed.

Michael Novak understands that people do not live by bread alone. Unless an economic system can explain itself in terms of a higher dimension of human experience, it will never satisfy more than the material needs of a people. Novak recognizes that the ideals of a capitalist system are different from those of a socialist system, and sets out to describe the ideal version of democratic capitalism. He concedes that people involved in

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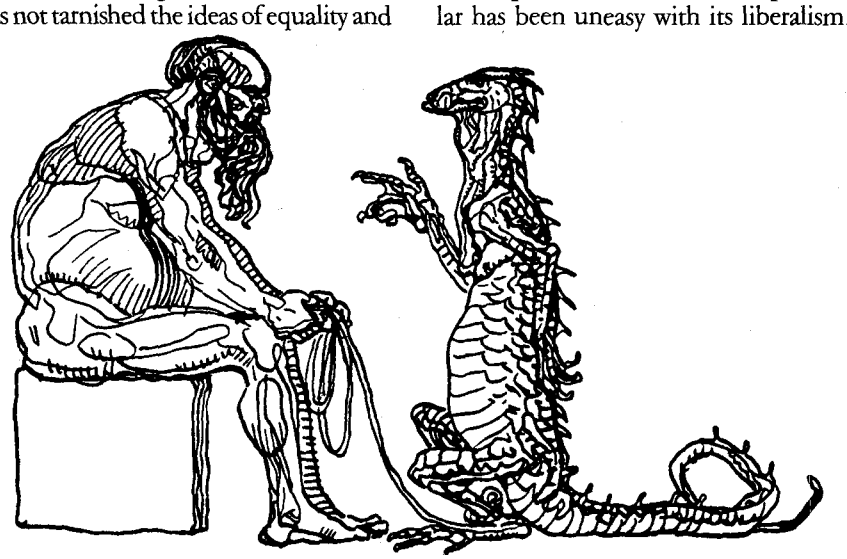
free enterprise seek their own advancement. He recognizes, however, that the operation of free enterprise encourages particular talents and virtues among its practitioners. The discipline, organization, and, yes, vision associated with organizing a productive enterprise in a free society have enormous potential, despite their supposedly selfish motivation, to contribute substantially to people's benefit. The spirit that Novak finds in democratic capitalism, then, is an elevating spirit which moves from the base origins that might animate some capitalistic impulses toward human improvement. Novak would agree with capitalism's critics that the marketplace does not readily distinguish between philosophy and pornography. He would immediately add, however, that no other system has demonstrated the ability to cultivate anything in people through the goods and services that it makes available. The system of natural liberty at least enables a variety of goods to reach markets, where products that might enlighten the people are free to compete with other goods and services.

Novak's book attempts to fill two serious voids in contemporary economic literature. First, he observes that socialism retains its status as an "ideal." That is, the sordid functioning of socialist economies has not tarnished the ideas of equality and justice espoused by socialist theorists. American intellectuals commonly embrace a socialism that is remote from anything instituted or developed by any government calling itself socialist. Novak demonstrates the futile nature of an "ideal" so divorced from practice. The second void Novak fills is the absence of any serious effort to explain the larger, spiritual dimension underlying capitalism. Some (e.g. Irving Kristol) can give capitalism only "two cheers" because it allegedly fails to reach the spiritual heights essential to human fulfillment. Others (e.g. George Gilder) impute noble sentiments like altruism where they may not be warranted, and wind up constructing defenses of capitalism that fail precisely because one's actual experience with entrepreneurs rarely calls to mind the generosity normally associated with true altruism. Novak has charted another course for those who seek a better understanding of the impulses supporting democratic capitalism.

That course begins with a frank acknowledgement of the spiritual, that is, religious, dimension of human existence. With Max Weber, Novak observes that capitalism developed at a particular point in history, and only in certain kinds of societies. Although Catholics and Jews applaud many of the virtues associated with capitalism, Catholicism in particular has been uneasy with its liberalism, and several encyclicals have attacked it in the course of criticizing capitalist economic practices. Novak, a Catholic himself, sympathizes with some of this criticism, but asks what Catholic cultures can offer instead. Concern with matters beyond this world has not enabled those in Catholic countries to ignore their material needs. Moreover, Novak demonstrates that it is unlikely that socialism disguised as liberation theology will produce either material abundance or spiritual elevation. For those liberated theologians who would prefer to ignore such matters, Novak reminds them that the social encyclicals attacking liberalism and capitalism reserved even stronger blasts for socialism.



Beyond the religious dimension of his argument, Novak has learned a great deal from history. He looks at the record of socialist economies at promoting prosperity and sees failures. Even Marx, Novak notices, simply assumed the material success of capitalism, and the socialism that he designed also takes the prosperity of capitalism for granted. Novak realizes that it is too late in the historical game to continue the pretense that socialism can provide prosperity, and that it is high time to consider the elements of character that socialism-in-practice destroys.

Novak's reading of history draws heavily on the works of Reinhold Niebuhr. Professor Niebuhr's early intellectual life was deeply influenced by socialist ideas, but gradually he began to concede some of the advantages of democratic capitalism. Novak acquired from Niebuhr the willingness to re-examine long and deeply held beliefs—such as two aspects of the common mythology that surrounds the moral evaluation of economic systems in the 20th century. First, he has rethought Adam Smith and the founders of the American commercial republic. Contrary to the mythology of "isolated individualism" that pervades American academic orthodoxy, Novak discovers profound communitarian themes in the writings of Smith, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madi-

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son. When these men thought of economic matters, they did so within the context of a political and social system. They took the flawed (that is, sinful) character of human nature for granted, and attempted to establish ways to allow or encourage human improvement, even if they could not assign a final goal to that development themselves. The early theorists of democratic capitalism were not protolibertarians. Second, Novak looks at America through foreign eyes. The idea of socialism is especially attractive to American intellectuals who are able to maintain a comfortable distance from actual socialist practice. In contrast, our homegrown intellectuals are likely to overlook the strengths of capitalism, whose defects they see firsthand every day.

Abroad, socialism is a god that fails continuously. From across the sea, others can see strengths in the American character that we seldom perceive. Jacques Maritain's *Reflections on America* observed the strength of community that had developed in the practices of the American people. Jean-Francois Revel, more recently, noticed that Europeans were constantly predicting that fascism was about to rise in America, as they averted their gaze from its development in the Soviet Union. America's experiment with democratic capitalism, in Revel's view, had enabled a "revolution without Marx or Jesus." The idea of revolution, of course, is the dominant idea of socialist mythology. In Marxian terms, the socialist revolution would occur when capitalism reached advanced decay, and the new order of equality and justice would be built upon the ruins of the old. In practice, it never worked out that way. Where socialist revolutions have occurred the old order was, indeed, destroyed, and only the ruins remain.

Democratic capitalism, as instituted by the American founders, never lays overt claim to the title, "revolutionary," but it adheres more pragmatically to revolutionary ideals. Where socialism promises instant and overwhelming change, capitalism promises nothing, and allows the agents of change to work through the marketplace in competition with those who would continue the old order. Over time, the economic system does not change visibly with only commercial fanfares as old products become obsolete and new products take their place, changing the tastes and the character of people as they change the goods and services that they consume. Similarly, the United States Constitution lacks the flair and glory of the Declaration of Independence, but the system that it established has institutionalized revolution in the political sphere. Change comes not as one climactic event, but gradually, over a series of elections; slowly, inexorably, the old order gives way to the new. Change sweeps into office as first one candidate, then others, with new ideas compete for the public mind. Our revolution is continued through the "deliberate sense of the community" (as *The Federalist* put it) rather than at the point of a gun. While maintaining continuity, both democracy and capitalism work for profound changes for people who live with the blessings of liberty. Socialism has failed both as an ideal and in practice. Understanding the way capitalism should work will require a renewed awareness of the capitalist ideal. We no longer judge the performance of democracy by monarchic standards. We should not evaluate capitalism by comparison with a socialist "ideal" that is as utopian as Plato's wish for a race of philosophic monarchs.

Novak has done those who are truly interested in understanding the moral basis of democratic capitalism a profound service. This book deserves the careful attention of those who want to renew their awareness of the moral potential of human liberty. □

Fleming

continued from page 6

and discover the fundamental points at issue. The same praise can be extended to his most recent book—up to a point.

Novak sets out to prove that the system of democratic capitalism is not only the most moral social and political system that has ever existed, but also the one that is the most consistent with Christianity. He scores his best points in comparing democratic capitalism with socialism, and he deflates, once and for all, the stubborn claim to high-minded idealism which socialists—many in full retreat from the ugly experience of Marxism—continue to maintain. "If an ideal doesn't work, isn't that evidence that it is out of touch with human reality? Isn't that a sign that it is a false ideal?" It is the realism of capitalism that makes it both effective and moral: it is rooted in our nature. The results of democratic capitalism have been an extension of material benefits so broad that Western civilization has "triumphed over envy." Novak takes up the claims of socialism one by one and explodes them with the ease and accuracy of an experienced trapshooter. He condemns socialism for its failure to keep any of its promises and discovers in the free choice of democratic capitalism a reflection of our Creator's intention—that we should be free to choose. Most defenders of capitalism would rest content with shooting down the socialist alternative, never realizing that there was once a political philosophy which repudiated both capitalism and socialism. Novak is far too learned to fall into that trap. Unlike many American conservatives, this disciple of Maritain is well aware that capitalism and democracy are the very essence of what used to be called liberalism and that they were resisted every inch of the way by the real conservatives—the defenders of tradition, authority, and good order: old English Tories like Sir Robert Filmer, Samuel Johnson, and Sir Walter Scott; Roman Catholics like Pope Pius IX and Joseph de Maistre; the political philosophers of

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the Old South—George Fitzhugh and John C. Calhoun; and the various right-wing movements of this century—the Action Française in France and the Falange in Spain (but definitely not, as Novak points out, the National *Socialists* in Germany). The best-known living representative of old conservatism is Alexander Solzhenitsyn, whose sentiments are baffling and offensive to liberals (democratic capitalists) and socialists alike. What the old conservatives feared most was the rootless and ruthless individualism set loose in the world by liberal democracy. Conservatives—and even some liberals—were unable to see the aura around democracy. For them, it was simply a form of government to be judged on its not-very-illustrious record. Freedom was only—in Hobbes's words—"power divided into small fragments," and democracy, far from being the will of the people, was no more than the endless contest of wire-pullers and political scoundrels over who could heap up the greatest number of fragments. By pitting individual against individual in a bestial struggle for survival and power, democracy led to a weakening of family and community ties, a dissolution of moral and aesthetic standards, and a gradual concentration of power in the hands of the state. In the opinion of European conservatives like Joseph de Maistre, Rousseau was the real key to liberal democracy, because he had the clearest head. Rousseau realized that individual liberty could never be guaranteed so long as the ties of family, class, community, and faith kept men different and unequal. For this reason, Jean Jacques became the first real Statist, in the modern totalitarian sense.

Novak meets the old conservative challenge largely by shifting the ground of debate. People are freer, more energetic, and more productive under democratic capitalism; liberal England enjoyed an unprecedented growth rate (2% per annum) in the 19th century; modern American workers enjoy a standard of living unimaginable to earlier generations. Americans have not lost a strong sense of community: it is preserved among immigrants and has been transformed, for the rest of us, into "a new order of community . . . of free persons in voluntary association." The family has not been destroyed—indeed, it was strengthened by the social developments of the 17th century—and today "the actual texture of life under democratic capitalism is not quite centered on the individual but on the family." The strongest argument, however, is not logical but rhetorical. By lumping together old conservatives and socialists, associating mercantilist economics with Marxism, and identifying all precapitalist economics with mercantilism, Novak draws a convincing picture of freedom against servitude, prosperity against stagnation. In fact, the sort of economic planning associated with mercantilism is an essentially modern ideology. Diocletian's celebrated edict on price controls came late in the history of the Roman Empire and had the predictable results. The progress of trade and industry has undoubtedly made life easier in the modern world, but it is impossible to weigh and measure the value of happiness of human life. Gibbon, standing on the threshold of the modern world, thought man had never been happier than in the despotic age of the Antonines, and many a modern executive spends his free time mooning over the L. L. Bean catalogue, dreaming of getting away from it all. Technological progress *has* given us more free time to enjoy ourselves, but how we spend our time may well be more important than the number of hours in our work week. The !Kung Bushmen of the Kalahari, after all, have at least as much free time as most American workers.

Democracy and capitalism are not, by their very nature, static phenomena, since both depend on free choice. In one view of the matter, democratic capitalism represents a transition from one form of absolutism to another. The historical fuzziness of the phenomena partly explains Novak's willingness to attribute to it both the virtues it inherited from traditional societies and the adjustments forced upon it by socialists. No one denies that immigrants—especially those from Eastern and Southern Europe—bring with them a strong sense of community, but the preservation of communitarian traditions among these immigrants (who do not come from countries with a profound experience of democratic capitalism) is largely in spite of rather than because of capitalism. He makes the valid point that our community life is not so impoverished as its critics—including the early Novak—have suggested, but what is the meaning of this new, voluntary order of community? That, made desperate by rootlessness, we are looking for community surrogates on the job or in cult membership? Eliot's answer (another old conservative) comes to mind: "There is no life that is not in community, and no community not lived in praise of GOD. . . . And now you live dispersed on ribbon roads, and no man knows or cares who is his neighbor. . . . What is the meaning of this city?. . . We all dwell together to make money from each other."

It is difficult to generalize about patterns of family life—even in Western Europe, where the form of the family seems to vary from class to class, region to region, and age to age; however, it is safe to declare that the strong family is *not* an invention of democratic capitalism, quite the reverse. There was a time when sons were expected to carry on the father's occupation, when status was by and large determined by family, when children were required to take care of their aged parents, and where the primary responsibility for child-rearing rested with the family. All that has changed—for the better, some claim—but it has not made the family stronger. The fact that there is a residue of social coherence cannot fairly be used as proof that the pursuit of freedom and equality does not diminish the strength of community life. If capitalism has clung, for a time, to certain relics of traditional life, it has also borrowed from socialism. Capi-

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talist England did experience exhilarating economic growth, but it is all too easy to forget what those growth rates meant to members of the British working class, whose desperate conditions drove Carlyle to a frenzy of despair (*Past and Present,* 1843). Tories like Walter Scott, in his diary, called down divine vengeance on the heads of capitalists who had disrupted and destroyed the health and sanity of working-class life. Parliamentary investigations into the working conditions of mines and factories created such a scandal that Southern American slaveholders were inspired to a sense of moral superiority.

Novak concedes that American capitalism had its share of abuses, but claims that they have been corrected by the democratic political process. The fact is that many of the measures that have rendered the life of the proletariat bearable are of socialist inspiration: social insurance, care of the elderly and disabled, unemployment compensation. Many American conservatives, i.e. democratic capitalists, argue that such services are better provided by families, churches, and local communities. And so they are. But the old conservatives had argued all along that unrestrained competition—the doctrines of liberty and equality—would destroy the effectiveness of those institutions. Of course "the people"—the 25-30% of the electorate that determines the outcome of an election—can vote in socialist measures. They could also vote in mercantilism—or even monarchy, as the insurrection of 13 Vendemaire threatened. The growth of democracy has been paralleled, as Rousseau predicted, by the atrophy of every corporate body that served as a buffer between the individual and the all-powerful state. The same period has witnessed a slow but inexorable degeneration of cultural institutions, of religion and "the arts." Novak is struck by the common prejudice that aristocratic societies produce greater art than democracies, even though "palaces, monuments, and salons were virtually never executed by aristocrats." Of course not many monuments have actually been built by bourgeois labor. Mass tastes, he allows, do not favor great art (how does one explain Aeschylus and Shakespeare?), but it is a curious feature of contemporary life that modern artists, enjoying all the benefits of bourgeois society, should heap so much scorn on the dominant class. "The middle class seems to be the first class in history to delight in self-ridicule and self-criticism." Why? If all is so well with democratic capitalism, why do most of the bright young people waste half their lives attacking it?

The West *has* undergone a failure of nerve. It has lost faith in its own traditions and identity. Novak praises the U.S. for its cultural pluralism and argues that it would be a mistake to attempt the Christianization of such a society: "Prematurely, before the endtime, to attempt to treat any society of this world as a 'Christian society' is to confound precious hope with sad reality." A Solzhenitsyn may be horrified by our pornography, but a certain level of vice ought to be tolerated in the interests of freedom. A pluralist society must leave its citizens—as their Creator intended—free to make their own mistakes. But is there a neutral position on sin? You are either against it—in which case you punish the public manifestations of vice—or you are for it—in which case you leave it alone: sin does not need any more encouragement than toleration. Most Christians do believe that their Creator made them free to choose between good and evil, but they also believe that He gave them the law and the authority of government "for the correction of wickedness." Novak may be comfortable living in a society that tolerates Mr. Hefner and Mr. Guccione, but in most of us who are sons, husbands, and fathers to women, the prominence of these pornographers brings out the Torquemada. Modern societies promote pluralism of faiths and morals because faiths and morals are reduced to *values* that can be bought and sold. We persecute neither Protestants nor Catholics not because we recognize the truth that is common to

LIBERAL CULTURE

Electra Meets Oedipus

Mothers—at least those we know—invariably take pride in what their children do. One particularly heartening thing for them is when their daughter gets married, flying in the face of the Gallup poll. One mother recently wrote to *Ms.* magazine bursting with pride that undoubtedly stretched her Gloria Vanderbilt top all out of shape. The boastful matriarch described how "My daughter married recently and I gave her away." She added, "The minister had a terrible time trying to handle that!" Naturally, the sexist wimp wanted the father to give away the bride, thus perpetuating that male conspiracy sometimes termed "tradition." Mother and daughter were insistent, the latter making an appeal to chronology: "'She has been my mother for twenty-

five years and she is walking down the aisle with me.'" That rhetorical flourish seemingly devastated the poor preacher. Down the aisle the two trod, the scene undoubtedly resembling David's Liberté, with mother grasping child instead of the Tricolor. This raises a question: to *what* was the daughter turned over? □

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both but because we are, in large measure, indifferent to all religion. We do not, after all, believe in tolerating groups which disagree with us on fundamental issues: religious "bigots," racists, fascists, nazis, aristocrats.

Capitalist democracy has brought unprecedented prosperity to the West. We have every reason to be proud of our achievements. If man lived by bread alone, ours would be the most blessed society since Eve persuaded Adam to stand up for his rights. If any man could have defended democratic capitalism as a self-sufficient social creed, it would have been Michael Novak. Unfortunately, capitalism rests more securely on Mandeville's principle—that private vice is public good. We have learned to what heights of prosperity men can climb, once their wills and energies have been set free, but we have forgotten the old lessons of order and stability; in our zeal for freedom and equality, we have neglected the aristocratic virtues of courage, honor, and loyalty. The free market and democratic processes are tools to achieve our ends, not the ends themselves. Novak has done American political thought an immeasurable service by reopening communication with the Old Conservatives, whose warnings we, in the time of our greatness, refused to heed. □

Wrecking Creation

Denis Donoghue: *Ferocious Alphabets;* Little, Brown & Co.; Boston.

Edward Weeks: *Writers and Friends;* Little, Brown & Co.; Boston.

Russell Fraser: *A Mingled Yarn: The Life of R.P. Blackmur;* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; New York.

by Stephen L. Tanner

R. P. Blackmur, in 1935, defined literary criticism as "the formal discourse of an amateur." How things have changed. Literary theory and criticism are presently enjoying a boom in literature departments, but it scarcely seems a league for amateurs. To be fully conversant with the versions of poststructuralism, particularly deconstruction, requires a professional philosopher's knowledge of Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and others, as well as an understanding of the influence of such thinkers upon certain contemporary French philosophers and literary theorists. It also helps to have more than an amateur's acquaintance with modern linguistic theory.

Most people interested in literature know about the New Criticism. In fact, even though the New Criticism has been essentially dead as a conscious movement for over two decades, its mark can be discerned in almost all of the teaching, interpreting, and reviewing of literature that goes on today. But relatively few are aware of how the basic tenets and implications of that approach to criticism have evolved and transformed in recent years. Many English professors got off at the New Criticism stop, settled in the neighborhood, and haven't noticed that the train continued on to such stations as structuralism, semiotics, reader-response theory, and deconstruction. The route has become increasingly technical and specialized. Many passengers who might be inclined to continue the journey can't even puzzle out the timetable. But during the last few years, a battle has broken out that has brought poststructuralism to public attention. It erupted in the pages of scholarly journals devoted to critical theory and filtered down through journals of less rarified content and wider audience until it reached popular magazines such as *Harper's, Newsweek,* and the *New York Times Book Review.* It even found its way into two sessions of "The Dick Cavett Show."

One of the first important skirmishes occurred in 1972 in *Diacritics* when J. Hillis Miller published a devastating review of M.H. Abrams's *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature.* This is a book in the grand tradition of modern humanistic scholarship, the tradition of Curtius, Auerbach, Lovejoy, and C.S. Lewis. It was because of this that Miller attacked it, for his real target was the tradition itself, which he considers inadequate in its concepts of language, literature, history, and interpretation. This opening salvo led to an all-out war in which, according to spokesmen for contending forces, the very nature of writing and the future of criticism are at issue.

On one side are the partisans of the humanistic tradition, who believe that literature is a reflection of life and that the purpose of criticism is to interpret and evaluate it under the general assumption that authors have some kind of meaning or criticism of life they wish to communicate. On the other side are the proponents of a radical literary theory that undermines all the humanist's assumptions about relationships between author and reader, literature and life. *Deconstruction* is the term applied to this approach, and the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, the most discussed new thinker on either side of the Atlantic, is the moving force behind it. His influence has been most vitalizing among a distinguished group of Yale professors: Geoffrey Hartman, J. Hillis Miller, Paul de Man, and Harold Bloom. Deconstruction, drawing heavily upon modern European theories of language and the nihilistic philosophy of Nietzsche, and learning something from existentialism, argues that all writing is reducible to linguistic signs on the page whose meanings have no relationship to the author's intentions or to the world outside the text. "There is no outside-the-text," Derrida asserts. To explicate any given passage, the reader must execute what

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Miller calls "a lateral dance of interpretation." In this sideways movement of deconstruction, the text is shown to have no determinate meaning, for the reader never reaches "any passage that is chief, original, or originating, a sovereign principle of explanation."

Denis Donoghue's *Ferocious Alphabets* should be viewed in the context of this battle. Through a series of penetrating reviews, Donoghue—like M.H. Abrams, Wayne Booth, and Gerald Graff—has taken up the challenge of deconstruction, articulately reasserting humanistic attitudes. Although his book discusses the ideas of nearly 20 modern critics and is a kind of polemic, it has an engaging personal quality. It is brief and highly readable—a refreshing contrast to the abstruse and jargon-laden writing of many of the radical theorists.

Donoghue introduces the book as being mainly about reading and only incidentally about writing. He is concerned with the recent shift of interest away from the author and toward the reader. The author, of course, is the principal casualty in the development of poststructuralism. "It is about time," says Michel Foucault, "that criticism and philosophy acknowledged the disappearance or death of the author." "As institution," says Roland Barthes, "the author is dead: his civil status, his biographical person, have disappeared." Donoghue believes the author is dead or missing only in a certain minority approach to reading and criticism. For most readers the author is very much alive, and his voice and presence are vitally important. Donoghue distinguishes between communion and communication and uses conversation as a model. The principal object of conversation, he suggests, is not communication, that is, conveying precisely a specific message. It is communion, a sharing of voice, feeling, and presence. He would like to replace a theory of communication by a theory of communion and argues that what writers want is a system of exchange much like conversation. Speech and conversation have high priority in his notions of language and literature. Consequently, as the dust jacket summarizes, he "divides the ideological front line into two opposing camps: the *Epireader,* who believes that literature must have a 'voice,' a 'speaker' behind it; and the *Graphireader,* who just as stubbornly asserts that literature is 'writing,' that any translation of words on the page into 'speech' or 'personality' is one more bourgeois delusion, another attempt at self-mystification."

Epireading, says Donoghue (he coins the term from the Greek epos, meaning speech or utterance), is unwilling to leave written words as it finds them on the page; instead, "it wants to restore them to a source, a human situation involving speech, character, personality, and destiny construed as having personal form." According to this approach, we read a poem not for knowledge or information but rather to commune or interact with another person: "*we* have a

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles of Culture:*

The Open Mind

"Contempt for formal language and literary tradition is an unfortunate part of our Romantic heritage, as it has been refined into the gospel of progress. The trouble with giving up the past is that it subjects us to Cicero's condemnation that ignorance of the past makes us eternal children. By ourselves, in a single generation, we can do little or nothing of value. When we fail to preserve what our ancestors have handed down to us, we find ourselves refighting their wars, rethinking their thoughts and rediscovering their wheels. Generations that seem to accomplish the work of an eon always owe their success to a rich inherited tradition. . . . We live, to be sure, in an age that takes pride in its liberations from the past. Our poetry and our music owe little, if anything, to tradition. Our poets have succeeded in abandoning all the trappings of rhyme, meter, structure, form and—most recently—English syntax. Theirs is a pristine and private art, utterly individual, absolutely ignored . . ."

—from "The Visions Forever Green" by Thomas Fleming

"Next to the American West, has any region exerted a greater pull on our collective imagination than Hollywood? Both have transcended the notion of mere locale and become part of the national mythology, complete with gods and demons, heroes and scoundrels. . . . The fusion of Hollywood as both industry and entertainment was not only the reality of moviemaking but, judging by Hawks's commentary, the ideal as well. The system was good: it worked, it produced the largest number of successful movies, the ones the public wanted. In effect, the financial failures were usually those that failed to satisfy their audience."

—from "Hollywood Revisited" by Mary Ellen Fox

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personal meeting in mind, not a message or secret. From print to voice: that is the epireader's direction [emphasis added]." Epireaders want to believe that "language is merely virtual until it has become speech, and that as speech it is mediation rather than substance." Graphireading, on the other hand, is "the eclipse of voice by text" (Geoffrey Hartman's phrase). It is, essentially, deconstruction, an ideology that refers, gloatingly, to the death of the author, the obsolescence of self, the indeterminacy of meaning, and so forth. Donoghue gives a fair and illuminating description of graphireading at the same time he asserts his preference for epireading. The sophisticated and often technical arguments in the current warfare of critical theory often intimidate the uninitiated with befuddling abstraction. *Ferocious Alphabets* has the admirable virtue of sharply and clearly delineating some of the most central issues.

It is interesting to turn to Edward Weeks's *Writers and Friends* with the notion of epireading in mind. If there are such things as epireaders, Weeks is certainly one of them. His very title indicates that it is the personality behind the writing that most interests him. And certainly what engages us most in reading this book is the voice and personality behind his literary reminiscences. These random memoirs recount the author's long and distinguished career as editor of *The Atlantic* from 1938 to 1966. That career includes—in addition to editing—book publishing, lecturing, traveling, hosting a radio program, writing columns, and acting in a variety of liberal causes. He loves people; indeed, one gets the impression reading the book that many articles appeared in *The Atlantic* primarily because he was interested in certain personalities and solicited contributions from them. It was not simply ideas and information he was seeking, but ideas and information shaped by a distinctive voice and personality. Graphireading, which can be fascinating and persuasive in its abstract theoretical formulations, fades in credibility amidst this treatment of writers as friends.

Ferocious Alphabets includes a chapter on R.P. Blackmur, in which Donoghue suggests that style for Blackmur became a compensation for a sense of communion or conversation he felt was lacking when he addressed himself to a blank page: "Words, including most particularly their sounds, associations, and textures, offer him relations nearly as rich as the sonority Barthes ascribes to friendship." This notion is corroborated in Russell Fraser's biography of Blackmur. Fraser notes in his preface how "The hermetic critic [Blackmur] hungered after an audience," and he quotes Blackmur as saying, "It is a terrible rejoicing I must do in my works."

To read this fine biography against the background of Donoghue's book and the current upheavals in critical theory is to recognize the extent to which New Critics like Blackmur provided the seedbed for poststructuralism. The New Critics were unaware of the full implications of their canonization of form and indifference to authorial intention. These notions were tacitly checked by traditional humanistic assumptions. Blackmur himself, as Fraser demonstrates, backed away from his New Critical tendencies in his later writing and became much concerned with the connection between art and society (an unfortunate falling away, in Fraser's view). Deconstructionists, consciously repudiating traditional humanistic assumptions, have carried the New Critical tendencies to their extreme logical conclusions, creating a New Nihilism for which all literature and criticism is the projection of subjective responses on an irrational cosmos. Blackmur was a skeptic and nominalist who felt that order is only apparent and opens on chaos. According to Fraser, "He considered that bewilderment was the terminus of all thinking, but resolved to push on to 'the maxi-

LIBERAL CULTURE

Classicism

A classic ad in *New York* magazine, the dream book for the middlebrow who lives in that specific enclave of the behavioral-chic intelligentsia between the East and Hudson Rivers:

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mum degree of bewilderment' in order to awaken and clarify this knowledge." In other words, Blackmur was a kind of protodeconstructionist. He still felt uneasy in recognizing what appeared to him the indeterminacy in literary meaning. The full-fledged deconstructionist is convinced not only that certainty is unattainable, but also that the only virtue lies in abandoning the attempt to achieve it.

Deconstruction, although highly vocal and fashionable, is a minority view. But in the realm of modern critical theory, minority views enjoy prestige and are able to dominate attention. The majority view remains the traditional one, the view that authors wish to express a view of life and that criticism ought to concern itself with what an author means and whether or not it is true or significant. Proponents of this view generally go about their business, enjoying literature and trying to make sense of it in relation to their understanding of actual human experience. Either they feel no need to proselytize for what seems obvious common sense or they are intimidated by subtle and sophisticated theorizing and allow it to monopolize the forum of critical discussion. With few exceptions, not since the New Humanists of the early part of our century—men like Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More—have we had forceful proponents of a criticism alert to lapses of moral vision. We have drifted away from evaluation until, as Lionel Trilling observed in 1970, "At the present time the idea that literature is to be judged by its moral effect has virtually no place in critical theory." We have now reached a point where the issue in academic criticism is simply whether it is possible to mean what one says and to convey that meaning to others.

A positive aspect of the deconstruction controversy is that it is forcing readers with traditional humanistic inclinations to re-evaluate and reassert their position. The challenge of deconstruction is hard to ignore, since it calls into question even the possibility of debating literary views—or any views for that matter. Gerald Graff has perceptively noted that "The dilemma of a culture so pluralized that it sees all reality as determined by the ideology of the observer is that it can't argue with itself, since it won't grant itself that measure of trans-ideological agreement necessary to make argument possible. The real question in such a culture is not how we can achieve consensus but how we can disagree." I hope (perhaps in vain) that the extremes of deconstruction will provoke a bold reaffirmation of the value and necessity of a criticism accessible to the ordinary educated reader which treats literature in relation with the author and the social and moral concerns of actual life. □

Between Yukon and Prague

John Perry: *Jack London: An American Myth;* Nelson-Hall; Chicago.

Ronald Hayman: *Kafka;* Oxford University Press; New York.

by Keith Bower

An attempt to reconcile London and Kafka in one piece of criticism may result in a dream in which one is standing before a law court, which consists of seven hermaphroditic sanatorium guards, being sentenced to spend the rest of one's life pulling a pack sled between Flin Flon and Skagway carrying a circulating library of Jack London's collected works. The differences between the two are staggering. It is hard to believe they both lived during the same period. Both had read Nietzsche hot off the press, but they had certainly received different messages from the dyspeptic saint of existentialism. Both were spared surviving to see the day when existentialism was a formally defined philosophical entity. If London's one-time friend Ambrose Bierce had been able to include a definition of the school in his *Devil's Dictionary,* it might have been: "Existentialism: the belief that existence precedes essence, that rational truth is a sign of bad faith, and that, all of this notwithstanding, train fare to Cleveland will still remain in excess of its actual worth."

Both London and Kafka were suicidal, died around their 40th year (of natural causes), and both had thoroughly mean upbringings. London's father would have made an interesting flim-flam man in one of O. Henry's "Jeff and Andy" stories. Jack left a nonetheless comfortable home in Oakland at an early age, looking for adventure, and spent the rest of his life mythologizing about his hard times, raffish youth, daring pluck, and virile propensities. The Jack London presented in John Perry's biography is, at best, a naive knave. London hated his chosen profession. "To me, writing is an easy way to make a fine living. . . . I am sincere when I say that my profession sickens me. Every story I write is for the money that will come to me," he told Emanuel Julius. London's biography is that of a hack writer whose life and thought was constantly arranged to increase his magazine sales (which at one time exceeded $80,000 a year). His profits funded an elaborate white elephant of a ranch north of San Francisco called Glen Ellen that was as important for his self-image as Hugh Hefner's revolving bed must be for his. Marx, Nietzsche, Spencer, and finally Carl Jung provided touchstones upon which London fashioned character motivations for some of the flimsiest mannequins ever to capture the attention of the book world.

For the better part of his career, until he kowtowed to his "capitalist editors" in a belated burst of patriotic drivel during World War I, London was a vigorous socialist. But his socialism was window dressing; the thousands of dollars he spent outfitting the *Snark* for a world cruise reflected his compassion for the

Mr. Bower works for a natural-family-planning organization.

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This Woman Needs YOU

She is enduring terrible anguish in our society. From every side, she is being encouraged to negate herself. Incredibly, in the name of "feminism" she is being urged to imitate men! In the name of "equal rights" she is being stripped of the privileges traditionally accorded the fairer sex. Tragically, in the name of "population control" she is being informed that it's OK to slay the flesh of her flesh in her womb. Ironically, in the name of "sexual liberation" she would be made the slave of the despair of one-night-stands.

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struggling masses much in the same way his drinking bouts highlighted his term as vice president of the National Defense Association, a temperance organization. In existentialist terms, you could express Jack London's entire sojourn on earth under the label "bad faith." Perry's biography is a *post facto* lie-detector test with London's testimony on nearly every subject torturing the poor machine beyond its parameters. His views on women drive the needle right off the chart—striding with the Suffragettes in his public life, inwardly haunted by fears of impotence and rage. His treatment of his first wife, Bessie Madern, and their three daughters would make good lyrics for a mournful country ballad. Part of his motivation for divorce, the main reason being chronic infidelity, was his disappointment at not conceiving a male heir. I've never forgotten how gloatingly London permitted the sled with flighty Mercedes and her two dudish accomplices, Hal and Charles, to fall under the ice of the Yukon while John Thornton and Buck gaze at them impassively.

At a display of children's "condensed classics" I thumbed through a copy of *Call of the Wild* to see if today's enlightened editors had done anything to moderate that vicious scene. It astonished me to see that this scene was intact, complete with an illustration of the woman flinging up her arms as the icy waters billow her Victorian dress. Women are respected in London's books only insofar as they resemble burly teamsters with mammary glands and the morals of a jackrabbit. As they were normally constituted in his day, women were weaklings, and there was no room on earth for such creatures in London's cosmos. Most of the other races fell under his callous theory of white supremacy, although London came to believe that the "yellow-skins" were to inherit the earth (except for the Chinese—he prophesied they would be exterminated by chemical warfare by 1976).

Perry's account of London's literary techniques, including his propensity for recycling previously published tales, plagiarism, and underpaying Sinclair Lewis and George Sterling, among others, for story ideas, is well done. I'm not sure the time spent on literary exegesis of London's morbid yarns is worth the candle, but it does amaze one how thirsty for print the journals of 70 years ago were. Aside from Perry's occasional repetitiousness and the fact that London's life was so full of obscuring lies that no real personality evolves from this in-

vestigation, the book is a good antidote to Irving Stone's *Sailor on Horseback.*

Ronald Hayman's *Kafka,* on the other hand, is all about personality, or as much of the personality of Franz Kafka as one can stand at any one time. Hayman thoroughly annotates Kafka's life from his massive diaries. Franz Kafka, unlike Jack London, loved to write. Whereas London wrote so his readers could escape to the Frozen North or South Seas, Kafka wrote to escape. London was definitely overpublished in his day; Kafka was unknown and virtually unpublished in his time.

Kafka's biography is the story of writer's jitters blown to heroic proportions. He was totally dedicated to literature; his whole personality, however, could be summed up as that of a writer with writing block looking for resolution. Someone once referred to him as the "artist as anorexic," and the psychosomatic appropriateness of his battle with constipation, which led him to naturopathic quack diets and ultimately tuberculosis, can be seen as a physical manifestation of a hellish creative drive.

Like Sören Kierkegaard, Kafka underwent a grueling, miscarried engagement to a woman he loathed; he searched through the rejection he anticipated from his affianced for masochistic confirmation of his worthlessness. Both Kierkegaard and Kafka had been condemned by their fathers. Kierkegaard found his relationship with his father in Abraham sacrificing Isaac and he spent his life blasting complacent, Laodecian State Protestantism. Kafka, unfortunately, spent almost the whole of his life next door to his grumbling, accusatory patriarch in a cramped Prague apartment.

Kakfa's life's work is a documentation of his dreams, which has been a dream come true for literary trash-sifters steeped in Freudian analysis. Hayman's biography is destined to burst a few academic bubbles. In collating and comparing all the images repeated in his stories, diaries, and letters, Hayman leaves little room left for dreary fabulists who've mined Kafka's tales without checking in with the sources of his nightmarish images. The professor who informed me that the two guards who take Joseph K. away in *Der Prozess (The Trial)* were symbolic of his testicles (they are the "closest to him") may be given an extended sabbatical to attend remedial reading lessons as this book gains the recognition it deserves.

Franz Kafka differs most radically from Jack London in that he is the most honest fellow I've ever read about. During his ill-fated five-year engagement to Felice Bauer he felt obliged to mention to her his passing affairs, including one with her best friend, Grete Bloch. After the engagement finally became impossible, he became consumptive. The disease gave him an excuse for his "failure to procreate," a fault of which his father subtly accused him. While making the round of Bohemian sanatoriums and pensions, he was lured into another affair with Julie

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Wohryzek, a fellow convalescent. A little while later Milena Jesenská Polaková, who was translating his work into Czechoslovakian and who was lovelessly married, fell his way. Not only did he let both women know of one another's existence, but even let Milena's husband in on the triangle. The only piece of dishonesty perpetrated by Franz Kafka was his subversive aid to employees who sought compensation from the insurance institute at which he spent most of his adult life grinding away, and in which he eventually rose to an indispensable position.

If London was a naive knave, Kafka was a self-proclaimed "diabolical innocent." He was conscious of the damage caused by his father's condemnation and his mother's emotional detachment. Part of his reluctance to marry and raise a family was his sense of the potential havoc he could raise with his offsprings' psyches. How often have we heard from the Pepsi Generation the incantation, "I'd make a miserable parent"? How often this has led to the further demoralization of the spirit which is best expressed by Kafka's comment: "We are nihilistic thoughts that come into God's head"? Yet Kafka's aversion to parenthood, which he envied in others, was not totally produced by Mr. and Mrs. Kafka's clumsiness.

By growing up in Prague, Kafka had inherited an unavoidable curse—Heidegger would callously call it a "facticity"—his Jewishness. Anti-Semitic street gangs and Czech nationalists persecuted Jewish citizens and unmercifully tormented their children in the schools. Kafka spent his youth denying the fact that his father, although only a lackadaisical synagogue-goer, made his living as a ritual slaughterer for kosher meats. Kafka could have thrown in the other overworked complaint of the Me Generation: "Who'd want to bring children into this screwed-up world?"

Kafka's feelings of being senselessly judged and condemned, an innocent with no right to petition, have served well as the prototype of modern man's disposition before totalitarian statism and an unreachable God who has made it everyman's lot to suffer mortality despite our individual merits. Though he might have been a much finer man than Jack London, Kafka brought into the world a literary offspring far more devastating and permanent than London's dated balderdash. Socialism and Aryan supremacy have wilted, but the term "Kafkaesque," used to describe any situation in which the feckless intellectual feels incompetent, will stay with us at least for the rest of this century.

The trouble with the Kafkaesque perspective is that it is existentialism's main cop-out. According to Sartre, existential man is totally free to be whatever he chooses. He is the animal that names himself; he calls the shots; in fact, he brings whatever essence he prefers into his own being. This goes much further than Jack London or Mark Twain telling us that morals are less important than a good steak; when they strip off civilization, we are at least left with instinct and power and animal vitality. The existentialist has made it imperative that "modern man" generate his entire identity from nothingness. London's creed attempted to abdicate moral responsibility by appealing to the survival of the fittest. Kafka's world demands that man accept his responsibility even for his instincts. Granted, the way the world is set up each is given a certain race, location in space, and is bound by mortality—but even these things are to be consciously accepted or rejected. Kafka, like most of us, accepted these givens and tried to work out his own meaning for them. Such a process is essentially religious, but when the help of inherited religion and the collective wisdom of past generations is spurned out of hand, then, like Kafka, we are left in a nightmare world devoid of meaning or love or anything identifiably human.

LIBERAL CULTURE

Tuff Guys

The cult program with a rapidly diminishing clan, *Saturday Night Live*, opens by informing viewers that it is originating in New York, "the most dangerous city in America." That is—presumably—funny, and such humor is responsible for a decline in ratings that can't be explained away by the departure of Ms. Radner, et. al. At least we thought it was supposed to be taken in jest. However, now we find that New Yorkers like to think that their rapidly crumbling city is special and are thus wearing danger like an "I (drawing of a heart) N.Y." button. At least that is the most plausible excuse for a sentence in a *Village Voice* review written by Andrew Sarris, an ostensibly rational man:

> Although *Night Shift* opens with the graphic murder of a pimp, it is not an especially violent movie.

After all, street-wise Sarris implies, it is only one panderer, and life is cheap in the most populous city in America. What he would have thought about the vivid portrayal of, say, the mere mugging of a film critic is another story. □

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Kafka, being honest, depicted his nightmares. He revealed the personality of the *déclassé,* stripped of humanity, nothing more than an insect. He showed the absurdity of living as such in a middle-class world, whose conventions became ridiculous by contrast. But when "modern man," bourgeois to his toenails, tries on existentialism, he is not as honest as Kafka. He accepts blow dryers and television, Renaults and Perrier. The only thing he chooses to discard is "conventional" morality. And, if in doing so he makes his world cheap, nasty, and angst-ridden, he looks around with bitter, cynical eyes and says the whole self-generated mess is "Kafkaesque," meaning it is not in the least bit his fault. A reading of Ronald Hayman's biography will disabuse any Saturday-night existentialist of the notion that what he is asking for in becoming one of God's "nihilistic thoughts" is any form of escape from responsibility. □

On Self-Defilement

Mark R. Elliott: *Pawns of Yalta: Soviet Refugees and America's Role in Their Repatriation;* University of Illinois Press; Urbana.

by Charles A. Moser

Mark Elliott, associate professor of history at a small Kentucky college, has written a thorough book on one of the largest moral dilemmas the United States government has faced in recent times, a situation in which those in charge of our government acquitted themselves poorly. The story of the forced repatriation of Soviet citizens freed from German prison camps or captured while fighting in German ranks in German uniforms has become a rather popular topic lately: Lord Nicholas Bethell has published a gripping account of it in *The Last Secret,* for example. Elliott has reviewed the existing literature and compiled a fascinating story too, though he is drier and more scholarly in his approach than Bethell. He deals with the moral aspects of the situation carefully, as well.

In the period following Hitler's surprise attack on the Soviet Union, the German armies, in their rapid advance, often encircled great numbers of Soviet military and civilian personnel, who were then made captives. Some were eventually dispatched to Germany to work in its war industry, which suffered critical labor shortages toward the end of the conflict. (Elliott remarks very aptly that "one of the greatest ironies of the Third Reich has to be that the nation so obsessed with racial purity forced the intermingling of the peoples of Europe on a scale unparalleled in the continent's history.") More recalcitrant captives went to slave-labor camps. And some prisoners—the more cooperative ones, who, after enduring the horrors of the Stalinist purges of the late 1930's, regarded the evil they did not know as better than the one they did know— fought along with the Wehrmacht in small detachments, or in a larger congregation known as the "Russian Liberation Army" under General Andrey Vlasov. Vlasov was returned to the Soviet Union after the war and was promptly executed; his name is synonymous with the blackest treason to the Soviet state.

In February 1945, at the conclusion of the Yalta conference, Franklin Roosevelt agreed to a convention specifying the return of all foreign nationals to their home countries at the end of hostilities. The Americans who signed the agreement probably did not realize that force would have to be used against Soviet citizens in large numbers if the pact were to be kept. When this fact became clear, the United States decided it was obliged to enforce the agreement regardless of the consequences. That led to the spectacle of American soldiers arranging transports for people who were purposely deceived as to their destination (the nazis used to do as much for their Jewish victims), forcing unwilling refugees into trucks and trying to prevent their charges from escaping or committing suicide—for they knew very well what lay in store for them.

The Soviets have always adopted an unforgiving attitude toward prisoners of war. The United States is a signatory to the Geneva Convention, which provides that a prisoner captured in the uniform of a particular nation is treated as belonging to that nation. But when it became known that 5% to 10% of all men captured in the West in German uniform were in fact Soviet citizens, the United States quite naturally wondered how to treat substantial numbers of citizens of an allied power captured while fighting for the enemy.

Initially, the Soviet government held that there were no Soviet citizens fighting for the Germans, but when the dimensions of the defections emerged, Moscow decided that this potentially huge embarrassment could only be eliminated through forced repatriation. It then used the issue as a means of exerting pressure on the Western Allies. The internal, official, Soviet view was that a prisoner of war was a traitor: a loyal soldier would commit suicide rather than submit to capture. The Criminal Code of the Soviet Union stipulated that a soldier who surrendered without justification be punished by death by shooting. Indeed, when Stalin's son Jacob was captured in a German encirclement in 1941, Stalin considered himself disgraced, and thereafter denied that he even had a son, forcing Jacob to choose suicide as his only way out. Elliott also cites the case of Lieutenant General Mikhail Lukin, also captured in an encirclement of 1941, and so badly wounded that both his legs had to be amputated. While being held, Lukin steadfastly refused to collaborate with his

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captors in any way. But when he returned to the Soviet Union after the war he was received as a semitraitor, and given a prison sentence.

If those who remained loyal to the Soviet regime received such treatment, clearly those who had actually fought against it could expect nothing better than execution if they returned to the Soviet Union. The question then became whether the Western Allies would accept the moral responsibility for compelling that return under these circumstances. The fact that they did was largely the result of the fundamental decision of the Western powers to form an alliance against nazi Germany with Stalinist Russia, probably the most oppressive regime ever to have existed on the face of the globe.

One of the major motivations for the United States' willingness to engage in forcible repatriation was the fear that the Soviets would retaliate by retaining or mistreating American citizens freed from German captivity as the Soviet armies swept toward Berlin: if Soviet nationals were not returned, then American nationals would not be either. One diplomatic official with excellent anti-communist credentials believed that the United States had no choice in this tragic matter. The Soviets could not comprehend the American readiness to consider prisoners of war virtually war heroes, but they were more than prepared to exploit that attitude for their own purposes (and no doubt advised the North Vietnamese to do the same during the Vietnam War, with excellent results).

Consequently, after Germany's surrender repatriation commissions and repatriation points were established by the Soviets in Western Europe and by the Western Allies in Soviet-occupied territories. But the situation was always asymmetrical. Since there were many more Soviet nationals in Allied hands than vice versa, the Soviets seized the opportunity to dispatch to the West large numbers of repatriation officials who spent much of their energies on intelligence-gathering, and allowed the Allies little in the way of reciprocity. As Elliott puts it, "whereas the Western Allies admitted hundreds of Soviet repatriation officials into their zones of occupied Germany, the most Moscow ever allowed Washington in its portion of the defeated Reich was one American contact team making one limited excursion." This was the sort of imbalance which has been endemic in Soviet-American relations, but which the majority of State Department officials apparently consider vital to the maintenance of world peace. The pattern is consistent: the Americans make concessions—often anticipatory concessions—which they are thereafter unwilling to revoke under any circumstances, while the Soviets, masters of obstructionism, take full advantage of the situation and concede as little as possible.

In this instance the imbalance was too severe even for our Ambassador to Moscow, Averell Harriman, who ordinarily had a high tolerance for such things. As early as March 1945 Harriman was so irked by Soviet intransigence on the repatriation question as to propose certain "retaliatory measures," which would have included imposing restrictions on Soviet repatriation officers to match those placed on Allied repatriation officers; holding back on Lend-Lease supplies; and allowing American ex-prisoners of war to speak freely to journalists about the difficulties they had encountered in reaching their lines from Soviet-occupied territory. The State Department was greatly opposed to any such measures, ostensibly fearing they would lead to further "retaliation" against American nationals. Secretary of State Stimson, in particular, thought it "very dangerous" to permit any publicity to be given to the treatment of liberated American prisoners on Soviet soil. Thus the thread of collusion in the lies upon which, as Solzhenitsyn writes, the Soviet system is built, is woven into the American foreign-policy establishment's approach to Soviet reality: it may not itself spread lies about the Soviet Union, but it willingly cooperates in repressing the truth about it. This attitude is visible even today in the disputes over the approach that should be taken in American-sponsored broadcasts to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

At the highest levels the moral dilemma of forcible repatriation was an abstract one: the numbers were too large, individuals were lost in forests of statistics, higher reasons of state compelled the implementation of a morally repugnant policy. The dilemma became much more personal to the soldiers who had orders to compel distraught Soviet prisoners to return to their own executions or, at best, lengthy prison sentences. One general then serving as a DP commandant recalled the whole process as the "most trying" of his "entire military career." At the Nuremberg trials German military officers were convicted of moral turpitude in having carried out inhumane orders from their superiors—at the very time when American soldiers were told to follow just such orders for the benefit of an even worse tyranny than the nazi regime. But we, after all, were the victors. Who would judge us?

Among those who found the whole situation "trying" was William Sloane Coffin, in 1946 a student of Russian serving as chief interpreter for American officers in Plattling, Germany and entrusted with the task of sorting out those to be repatriated to the Soviet Union. Initially Coffin was distinctly hostile toward Soviet collaborators with the nazis, but as he heard their stories he began to understand why they had acted as they did. On the evening before their "surprise repatriation" a group of DP's invited Coffin to an evening of amateur theatricals. He was heartsick as he sat among them. One word from him and many of them could even yet escape the fate which awaited them, for the camp was "minimally guarded": the Soviet DP's were kept there more by their trust in the Americans than anything else. But Coffin did not say that word, and on the next day 1600 men who had trusted the United States were delivered over to nearly cer-

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tain death. Some two decades later Coffin would use that immoral submission to authority as a twisted justification for his outspoken and ultimately successful opposition to an American policy which sought to prevent still other thousands of human beings from being delivered to communist tyranny in Vietnam. □

Grand Commemorations of Detail

Mircea Eliade: *Autobiography: Volume I: 1907–1937: Journey East, Journey West;* Harper & Row; New York.

***Poems and Sketches of E.B. White;* Harper & Row; New York.**

by Thomas Landess

Literary critics are forever preoccupied with what some have called "structure," with those elements of poetry and fiction that are spacious and fundamental: plot, character, and most of all, central theme. A critic feels he's done a day's work if he can account for every turn of action or change of heart in terms of some overarching paraphrasable argument, preferably "archetypal" in its implications. Yet what distinguishes a permanent work from an ephemeral one (or from one that is unpublishable) is not structure at all but something else. After all, one could make a thematic analysis of a literary work, extrapolate its thesis, write another work based on that; in all likelihood the finished product would be worthy only of the trash can. Structural elements are just not all-important to the success or failure of literature. What is more crucial is something that too many critics dismiss as the lesser part of literature—its texture. It includes such elements as the concrete particularities of imagery, the appropriateness of diction and syntax, and the intonation or voice of the narrative. These are the telling ingredients of poetry and fiction.

One can imitate the structural elements of another writer's work, but any attempt to imitate the texture ends up in pastiche or unintentional parody. Texture grows out of the writer's more unpredictable and irrational self—out of the uniqueness of his experience, the mystery of intuition, the nuances of sensibility and taste. To be sure, we demand from his work the old substantial truths of life which are perennially imitable, but what finally delights us most are "accidental" qualities analogous to those individual traits in other human beings that engage us, hold our attention, and —when their combination is inexplicably right—make us fall in love.

Mircea Eliade, in an autobiography that tells little of substantial interest, nonetheless renders the details of his childhood and early youth in such a way that despite his own self-indulgence, the world of Romania in the 1920's and 30's survives intact and makes an irresistible claim on the reader's imagination. Eliade, a great mythographer of the present age, may have been one of the greater jackasses of another time and place. Or so his own retrospective view leads us to believe. From early childhood he seemed determined to relive every legend of the Romantics, even reducing his sleep to four hours a night in order to have time for all the Goethean and Byronic variations. He lived in an attic surrounded by thousands of arcane books, which he read for days on end with little or no interruption. He was continually immersed in a pool of self-conscious melancholy. Eliade pored over scientific treatises at first, then literature and finally alchemical, hermetic, and mystical tracts. The result was that he pictured himself sailing proudly, defiantly, through a life-threatening storm in a frail, wave-tossed sailboat and standing on a craggy mountaintop amidst thunder and lightning, shouting Wagnerian arias at the Powers That Be. The youth published a hundred articles by the time he was eighteen and had written two self-aggrandizing, self-pitying autobiographical novels by the time he was 23. In addition, he planned, began, and then abandoned world histories and exhaustive encyclopedias. Like a young Kierkegaard he decided a priori that love threatened the "freedom and spiritual integrity" of the true genius and thus orchestrated the breakup of his first love affair: he wrote a fictionalized account of the parting and then insisted that his beloved read the manuscript so she could play her role exactly as he planned. Not surprisingly, he felt that he could learn more from his own random reading than from the professors whose classes he consistently cut. The eclectic scholar struck out for India at the age of 20 in order to learn everything there was to learn about mysticism in one year, was advised to stay five, compromised on three. Eliade studied in the home of India's most famous religious scholar until he became more interested in the Master's daughter than his dogma and was thrown out of the house. He fled to a Himalayan hut and was content to practice yogic meditations until a runaway female cellist, who also went to India to seek the absolute, suggested that they try certain Tantric rituals together without the benefit of guru. Again he was asked to leave the premises.

Eliade has spent his later years discovering what is substantial or universal in human experience. However, in this work he resists the temptation to make his own life an exemplar of youth, unbridled ego, or any other archetype. Sometimes he seems to be attempting to portray a kind of artist as a young man, a Romanian Stephen Dedalus, but then he trails off into accounts of casual friendships and catalogues of Bucharest literati, as if he had no consciousness of the world at large. In this respect he displays all the charm and occasional

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tedium of the reminiscences of a great man, which take on particular importance for the teller because they are his own.

If this narrative were fictional instead of genuinely autobiographical, it would suffer from a failure on the part of the narrator to set a proper distance between himself and the angst-ridden youth about whom he writes. The reader is never quite sure whether Eliade approves of the young man or understands the degree to which his hero is obsessed with the splendor of his own image. Part of the reason why this is true, of course, lies in the fact that his subject is not Narcissus, for unlike that archetypal lover of self who exemplifies all the purity of fleshless myth, the youthful Mircea Eliade is alive with every impurity his biographer can piece together. And therein lies the tenuous glory of his narrative. Suffice it to say that the young man he portrays eventually matured enough to write brilliantly about the great religions of the world.

Justice in America

It's well known that the criminal justice system in America is something of a misnomer, judging how those who are criminals often come off as though they are the victims. Expectation of such treatment is seemingly commonplace among the felons. An Illinois woman was recently on trial for killing her husband, then chopping him into conveniently disposable chunks, several of which are still missing. According to a newspaper report, the woman "seemed shocked by the verdict." The verdict: guilty. Frankly, if not shocked, we're mildly surprised.

* * *

We recently read a report that a convicted sex offender in New Jersey has had his sentence reduced from 15 years in prison to three years probation and a $2,000 fine because the judge was worried about the deviate's health. The man weighs 500 pounds. Soda shops, deli's and all manner of avoirdupois-inducing establishments in which anyone can eat one's way to freedom can now alter our obsolete application of criminal justice.

In all the testimony regarding the effect of prison on the criminal, no mention was made of how his crime had affected the mind and life of the 14-year-old girl he molested. □

E. B. White, like Eliade, is an elder statesman in the republic of letters. White spent his youth as a member of a well-known coterie, yet in this volume—made up of autobiographical sketches, letters, poetry, and occasional essays—he seems hardly aware of the New York literary scene. Instead he focuses on the activities of family members, servants, and zoo animals. Part of the difference between White's wry sketches and Eliade's passionately intimate self-revelations can be attributed to a contrast in cultural milieus. Eliade came from Eastern Europe, specifically, a country surrounded by Magyars and Bulgars and touched by the intense mysticism of the Eastern Church. In such a land a man might well stand on a Transylvanian mountain top and scream "The Cavalcade" from *Die Valkyrie* while lightning zigzagged around his head. White, however, comes from the eastern United States, where no one would think of defying the heavens in such a histrionic fashion unless he was drunk; and even if he did such a ridiculous thing, he would not, fifty years later, write about the occasion without a generous portion of self-parody.

Indeed, the self-deprecatory tone of White's own modest reminiscences serves as a most striking contrast to Eliade's narrative. Eliade celebrates his grand passions, but White tends to denigrate the importance of what he has lived through and felt. In replying to Louise Bogan, who once warned against those "small emotions with which poetry should not, and cannot, deal," White writes, "From the evidence in this book it is clear that if an emotion hit me, however tiny the little fellow was, I leapt into action without sizing the situation up—without cooling myself off to wait for a bigger fish. This can be damaging, if a poet is headed for greatness."

All this is very Anglo-Saxon in tone, altogether different from Eliade's Latin ferocity. Yet White, too, has captured the sights, sounds, and feelings of his time and place. More than his fellow *New Yorker* contributors Benchley and Thurber or Nobel laureates Hemingway and Faulkner, he has rendered in fine detail what it meant to be a middle American in the formative years of the 20th century. Although he often places himself at the center of the action in order to give the reader the full authority of the eyewitness, he is never the subject of his own story, or at least never the hero.

In fact, his essay entitled "About Myself" is autobiographical in only the most superficial way, as he defines who he is in terms of the multitude of numbers assigned to him, his family, and his animals by various government agencies. Similarly, his "Memoirs of a Master" is not the recollection of one who has learned the secrets of Zen or acquired the highest skills of a craft, but rather an ironic and sometimes affectionate chronicle of the servants he and his wife have hired and endured over the years. These pieces are typical of the famous *New Yorker* style which White, perhaps more than anyone else, helped to create: precise prose wrapped in a tone of satiric detachment capable of making fine esthetic and moral distinctions at its best and superficially snotty at its worst.

But White is not always arch or caustic when he speaks with the *New Yorker's* editorial voice, as he often did in "The Talk of the Town." Several of the sketches in this volume are lyric in their praises of the city's incongruous and surprising beauty. With only a touch of irony he celebrates Manhattan's pigeons, ending with a highly romantic tribute

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that brings Shelley to mind: "the egg miraculous upon the ledge, the bird compact upon the egg, its generous warmth, its enviable patience, its natural fortitude and grace." He likewise finds at a business-machine show the triumph of the human spirit, as men and women stand among the pieces of hardware, oblivious to their glitter, delighting instead in the subtle sexuality of one another. His portrait of a moose calf and two fawns at the Bronx zoo is a prose reverie of a finely tuned sensibility, one that holds out some hope for 20th-century man.

Eliade's autobiography was originally written in Romanian and was probably designed to hold communion with the dead and to preserve for a few of the living the image of an intellectual community which lived and died in Eastern Europe between the two Great Wars. White was writing for an audience that didn't care whether his narratives were set in New York or in the hinterlands, so long as they were entertaining and revealed the recognizable face of modern life. What each has succeeded in doing is to commemorate the concrete details of life in a way that is more and more valued by contemporary readers. Nonfictional narratives now outsell novels, and poetry is once again personal, intimate, and autobiographical. The public confessor —provided he confesses in sufficient detail—is not only purged of his sin but celebrated. This trend is by no means without its dark side, but at least it suggests that some people have stopped trying to explain life in terms of grand political and economic schemata and have started paying attention to the fine texture of the created order. □

Poetry of Personal Misfortunes

Sylvia Plath: *The Collected Poems;* Harper & Row; New York.

Sylvia Plath: *The Journals;* Dial Press; New York.

Anne Sexton: *The Complete Poems;* Houghton Mifflin; Boston.

by Robert C. Steensma

Insanity and suicide have long darkened our literary tradition. In the 18th century, for example, Swift, Sterne, Johnson, Chatterton, Cowper, and Collins were all haunted by the fear of losing their wits. Chatterton, at age 17, took arsenic and gave his life to what Yeats called "the Savage God"; later he was immortalized as "the marvelous boy," "the heaven-born genius," one of the "inheritors of unfulfilled renown" eulogized by the Romantics. In more recent times Hart Crane, John Berryman, Sylvia Plath, and Anne Sexton have taken their own lives, while others have been mesmerized by the sound of what Sexton called the "bells of Bedlam" in describing her own pyschoses.

By the time of their deaths, Plath and Sexton had already begun to make their reputations as young American poets. Both possessed bright talents, and both had written poetry which, though often uneven, seemed to assure them places in the American literary tradition. Intense, somber, painful—at times shocking—their work evidenced a stylistic and thematic flowering which was to be nipped by Plath's death at 30 in 1963 and Sexton's at 46 in 1974.

But the spirit of our times has caused the two women to be viewed in some circles not as poets but as martyrs for the feminist cause. The publication in 1963 of Plath's disturbingly autobiographical novel, *The Bell Jar,* which deals with her earlier mental breakdown and suicide attempt, moved one critic to describe the book as "one of the few sympathetic portraits of what happens to one who has genuinely feminist aspirations in our society, of a girl who refuses to be an *event* in anyone's life." Joyce Carol Oates believes that Plath is a tragic figure who reflects "the pathological aspects of our own era that make a death of the spirit inevitable." For Maxine Kumin, Sexton "delineated the problematic position of women—the neurotic reality of the time —though she was not able to cope in her own life with the personal trouble it created."

Thus both have been canonized as artistic and sensitive women destroyed by a cruel and chauvinistic world which deeply distrusts the female as artist and careerist. Plath and Sexton are, from this perspective, to be numbered among Wordsworth's sainted few: "We poets in our youth begin in gladness;/But thereof come in the end despondency and madness." Sexton herself seems to have anticipated this situation in "The Big Heart":

> They hear how
> the artery of my soul has been severed
> and soul is spurting out upon them,
> bleeding on them,
> messing up their clothes,
> dirtying their shoes.

The theme of the severed artery appeals to the morbid modern literary taste with its emphasis on egotism and violence.

These three new editions will prove both a blessing and a curse: a blessing because they are well-edited texts of genuine poets, but a curse because they will inspire wagonloads of misleading psychiatric and feminist criticism. Recently awarded the 1982 Pulitzer Prize for poetry, the volume of Plath's works contains about 275 poems (including 50 items of "juvenilia"). The Sexton book reprints about 350. The journals of Plath cover the years from 1950 through 1962, but, for reasons not entirely clear, have been published in a strangely incomplete state. Scholars and historians now have excellent material to work with, but the necrophiles will, unfortunately, find a rich vein of fool's gold.

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Both Plath and Sexton were of New England stock, and both showed early promise. Plath published her first collection, *The Colossus,* in 1960. Three others were published posthumously. Sexton's first book, *To Bedlam and Back,* also appeared in 1960; she published five more. Plath was a Phi Beta Kappa, a Fulbright scholar, and a teacher at Smith; Sexton was a Robert Frost Fellow at Bread Loaf, a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Royal Society for Literature, a nominee for the National Book Award in 1963, and winner of the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1967. They were also friends and fellow students of Robert Lowell at Boston University.

Each is capable of evoking rare and valuable insights, and each has produced poetry that will stand with some of the best of the last quarter-century. In "Black Rook in Rainy Weather," for example, Plath shows how a simple bird can speak to the human spirit:

> I only know that a rook
> Ordering its black feathers can
> so shine
> As to seize my senses, haul
> My eyelids up, and grant
> A brief respite from fear
> Of total neutrality.

Or in "Hardcastle Crags" she can distill the loneliness and isolation of an old woman:

> Flintlike, her feet struck
> Such a racket of echoes from the steely
> street
> Tacking in moon-blued crooks from
> the black
> Stone-built town, that she heard the
> quick air ignite
> Its tinder and shake
> A firework of echoes from wall
> To wall of the dark, dwarfed cottages.

Dozens of other poems, both early and late, show the same command of form and content.

But as the years hastened on, an anguished and confessional tone emerged and deepened into what one critic calls "the holy scream, a splendid agony—beyond sex, beyond delicacy, beyond all but art." The often-anthologized "Daddy" of 1962 is symptomatic in its frightening attack upon basic human relationships and its revelation of her own dying spirit:

> I could never talk to you.
> The tongue stuck in my jaw.
> . . . .
> Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm
> through.

"Paralytic," written about two weeks before her suicide, foreshadows the end:

> Let me relapse
> While the day outside glides by like
> ticker tape.
> . . . .
> Dead egg, I lie
> Whole
> On a whole world I cannot touch.

"The Edge" is her last poem, composed about a week before she yielded to the dark impulse:

> The woman is perfected.
> Her dead
> Body wears the smile of
> accomplishment.
> The illusion of a Greek necessity
> Flows in the scroll of her toga.

Thus she finds her fulfillment only in death, a moment anticipated a few years earlier in her journal: "I cannot ignore this murderous self; it is there. I smell it and feel it, but I will not give it my name. . . . I have this demon who wants me to run away screaming if I am going to be flawed, fallible."

Sexton, on the other hand, seems to have known little happiness. Taking up poetry at age 28—at the suggestion of her psychiatrist—she tried to exorcise her personal devils in poetry that typically deals with abortion, adultery, drugs, sexual frustration, incest, masturbation, menstruation, and suicide. Probably no other well-known poet has dwelt so persistently on disturbing aspects of human experience with such manic detail. Most readers are understandably uneasy with such poems as "The Abortion," "In Celebration of My Uterus," "The Breast," "Menstruation at Forty," and "The Ballad of the Lonely Masturbator," all of them, as their present editor describes them, "a fever chart for a bad case of melancholy." For Sexton, as she writes in "Noon Walk on the Asylum Lawn,"

> The world is full of enemies.
> There is no safe place.

Most of her poetry, then, proves her thesis that "poetry should be a shock to the senses."

Not all of her work is in this sensational and confessional mode. Occasionally she rose above the psychotically personal, as in "The Farm Wife," in which a woman, now married for a decade, desperately hopes that

> there must be more to living
> than this brief bright bridge
> of the raucous bed.

In one of her very best, "The Truth the Dead Know," written shortly after the deaths of her parents, she wrote movingly on the grief and love experienced when one is "tired of being brave." After the funeral, a trip to the seashore gives her a sense of renewal:

> where the sun gutters from the sky,
> where the sea swings in like an iron
> gate
> and we touch.

But the dead

> lie without shoes
> in their stone boats.
> They are more like stone
> Than the sea would be if it stopped.

"... a shattered mirror of suffering womankind."
—*America*

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These and similar poems may be enough to maintain her place in American poetry. Still, there are too many which are either embarrassingly confessional or simply crude, as "The Jesus Papers," in which Christ is, among other things, an Oedipal buffoon.

All fine poets occasionally write badly, some more than others, and most have sometimes indulged in autobiography. In almost all cases the final judgment on their work is made in terms of the quality of introspections into the human condition and rarely upon their personal misfortunes. Plath and Sexton are indeed distinguished poets, but their worth must be predicated on something other than the severed artery and the lacerated heart. But given the fascination of late 20th-century culture with violence and perversity, this is not likely to happen soon. Later, perhaps, they will be properly categorized as able verbalizers of sterile night thoughts. □

Consultative Democracy

Larry J. Sabato: *The Rise of Political Consultants: New Ways of Winning Elections;* Basic Books; New York.

by Mark G. Michaelsen

The culture of a society is perhaps best measured by the tools its members use to go about the business of everyday life. The tools which mark modern American culture are those of advanced communications: the telephone, the television, the computer. Ours is an information age, and advanced communications technologies permeate everything—from commerce to education, from entertainment to medicine. It should come as no surprise, then, that the postwar technological revolution affects American politics. Since a candidate may lack the expertise necessary to wield the new weapons effectively, political image-making, polling and fund-raising now require the services of specialists—the political consultants. Sabato's study focuses on these figures behind the modern candidate and carefully examines the role of the media consultant, the pollster and the direct-mail specialist.

Himself a campaign veteran of some note, Sabato writes knowledgeably and lucidly. In the course of his research, he interviewed dozens of leading consultants, journalists and scholars familiar with the trade and viewed hours of political advertising footage. The result is a thorough study of the origins and refinements of modern campaign technology, generously sprinkled with quotes (both amusing and horrifying) from the cognoscenti and examples of some of the best and worst of political advertising. Notably scarce, however, are the views of politicians—and not without reason: the author claims that his discussions with a former President and other elected officials proved fruitless. "At first I was astounded at how little candidates knew about either the men and women they had hired at great cost or the tools of the consultant's trade," writes Sabato, "but in retrospect this is less surprising. The new campaign technology is more complex than ever before, and an understanding of it requires specialized training and experience that most candidates simply have not had." In other words, a candidate must put ever-greater trust in his specialists, a point Sabato makes frequently.

It is Sabato's contention that the rise of political consultants has hastened the decline of the democratic process and traditional party politics, although he admits that the demise of party identification was under way well before the advent of the specialists. Consultants have traded on and hastened that decline by waging "personality cult" campaigns, typically portraying the candidate as fiercely aloof from the influence of the once-notorious party bosses. The skills needed to wage a winning campaign are seen to be possessed less by party leaders than by mercenary, nonaligned specialists. Sabato fears that consultants have become preselectors in the electoral process. Their skills may appear so vital that a candidate who is unable to secure their services may be unwilling even to run. And as a consultant's services do not come cheap—a typical bill may run $100,000 per election—several possible candidates are immediately excluded.

More chilling is the effect of the consultant on the electorate. Political advertising increasingly takes on all the characteristics of Madison Avenue, offering voters not the vital information necessary to make responsible, informed choices, but concentrating instead on attractive images and simplistic bumper-sticker slogans. Polling becomes more than a mere demographic exercise; its findings serve also to shape opinions. Direct-mail campaigns often appeal to the emotions, discouraging rational discussion of complex issues. Then there are negative advertisements that are designed not to push a candidate but to sully his opponent. The combined effect is to influence voter behavior through bombast rather than fostering enlightened electoral choices.

Equally disturbing is the consultants' postelectoral influence on the candidates. It augurs ill for democratic government when an official's closest circle of advisers consists of professional image-makers and public policy becomes a matter more of form than of substance. Patrick Cadell and Gerald Rafshoon of the Carter White House were prominent examples of that phenomenon.

Sabato does not consider all political consultants a low and unscrupulous lot; indeed, many are highly principled and even more claim to be. Yet in an era of

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mass communications the danger of abuse is great. As Locke observed, "All men are liable to error; and most men are in many points, by passion or interest, under temptation to it." It is not unlikely in a large campaign that unethical practices could be perpetrated without the full knowledge of the high command. Half-truths, selective interpretation—even fudging—of polls, sordid innuendos: all are unfortunately inherent in politics. To be sure, irresponsibility is a matter of degree, and consultants are unlikely to undertake any activity so heinous as to damage their candidate, their reputation or their livelihood, but in the heat of a campaign, where there is no garland awarded for second place, little time is spent in contemplation of the ethical niceties of a prospective course of action. For these reasons and others, Sabato feels it is in the public interest to exert some sort of restraint on the activities of political consultants, although his suggestions for exercising control are vague. The federal election laws passed in the early 1970's—which were intended to stem rapidly escalating campaign costs, strengthen the role of the parties and promote competition in the electoral process—have had some distressing effects. For example, limitations on individual and party contributions have shifted money sources into ideological or single-issue PAC's, further undermining the importance of parties, enhancing the advantages of incumbency and inflating campaign bills through compliance costs. Sabato concludes that federal legislation is unlikely to meet the challenge effectively, in part because the lawmakers who would draft the statutes might owe their positions to those whom they would regulate. He urges the repeal of several provisions of the Federal Elections Campaign Act and its myriad amendments and suggests instead a ban on contacts between office-holders and former consultants. He also presents a rather intriguing idea of mandating a *minimum* length for commercials, say ten minutes, in an attempt to concentrate more on substantive information rather than on the pretty pictures and catchy slogans so common to the thirty- or sixty-second spot. He admits that this practice, which is employed in Britain, may not be applicable to American TV programming.

Potentially effective is self-regulation by consultants themselves through adherence to, and strict enforcement of, a code of ethics adopted by the American Association of Political Consultants. This code proscribes such activities as "scurrilous attacks on a candidate" or intentional dissemination of misleading information. The amusing thought of some committee determining what constitutes "scurrilous" or "intentional" aside, Sabato proposes that transgressors be publicly pilloried in the media, using every resource the organization can muster. He also challenges the press to act more responsibly by scrutinizing polls and the activities of consultants much more closely. He even goes so far as to suggest that every major newspaper hire a polling expert. But in his zeal, Sabato fails to notice a key characteristic of the mass-communications culture. The explosion of information technologies conferred enormous power upon the gatekeepers of the fourth estate. In the final analysis, they have the greatest influence on voter perceptions. Sadly, despite their claims of objectivity, the media elites are dominated by those with a liberal bias. Surely this bias is, to a large degree, responsible for the conservative community's expert use of direct-mail techniques based on computer technology. Unable to get a fair hearing in the press, it became necessary to develop other methods.

Great strides have been made in the development of political advertising, direct-mail campaigns and polling techniques. It is not inconceivable that these services may become so professional that the need for outside consultants will decline, effecting a resurgent party role. But what of the abuses in these new campaign techniques—the advertisements long on form but short on substance, the fudged polls and the direct-mail pieces laced with tawdry appeals to emotion instead of hard facts? Perhaps that very danger will serve as a self-correcting mechanism. When the elaborately produced, expensive advertising campaigns yield no new voters, when the direct-mail appeal for funds fails to pay for itself, and when the polls reveal the disenchantment of voters, it will be clear that those methods are no longer appropriate; the culture will dictate new uses of the available tools, and perhaps new tools altogether. □

In the Mail

Matter, Life, and Evolution **by John G. Elliott; Gibson-Hiller Co.; Dayton, OH.** This examination of life starts with the basic particles of physics and works to a universal approach to consciousness.

The Gambling Mania On and Off the Stage in Pre-Revolutionary France **edited by Tamara Alvarez-Detrell and Michael G. Paulson; University Press of America; Lanham, MD.** This socio-psycho-literary examination presents the gambler and his world in the context of the period of Louis XIV and Louis XV via the literature of the day.

The American Presidency: Principles and Problems, **Volume I, edited by Kenneth W. Thompson; University Press of America; Lanham, MD.** The Presidency—from selecting a leader to what the future may hold for the office—is examined, as are various aspects (morals, national security, etc.) related to it.

The Western Heritage and American Values: Law, Theology, and History **by Alberto R. Coll; University Press of America; Lanham, MD.** The intellectual heritage of American values is discussed so as to provide a basis for the examination of the current political and intellectual scene. Key figures are Vitoria, Pascal, and Butterfield.

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Unfunny Amoralists

Gail Godwin: *A Mother and Two Daughters;* The Viking Press; New York.

Nancy Thayer: *Three Women at the Water's Edge;* Doubleday & Co.; New York.

by Susan Tunney

"The first use of good literature," G.K. Chesterton once wrote, "is that it prevents a man from being merely modern. To be merely modern is to condemn oneself to an ultimate narrowness, just as to spend one's last earthly money on the newest hat is to condemn oneself to the old-fashioned. The road of the ancient centuries," he warned, "is strewn with dead moderns." Chesterton's point holds, as indicated by the fact that most great novelists have closely observed the follies of their times. Noticing what is peculiar, or ridiculous, requires knowing what is *not* peculiar—that is, lasting. The trick, of course, is to believe in the lasting and eschew the peculiar. There is all the difference in the world between noting the latest absurdity in hats and deciding to wear it.

Satirists have always understood this distinction, and 20th-century satirists perhaps even better than those of earlier times—in the 20th century, satire *is* the exaggeration of the modern. An excellent example is the work of Evelyn Waugh. In *Vile Bodies,* for instance, Waugh lays waste to the Jazz Age by taking what was modern—the partying, gossiping, carefully frivolous ethos of the Bright Young Things—and making it the very center of his characters' lives. As a result, the lives they lead are empty and sometimes tragic. The characters almost never reflect on their condition, though once in a while a glimmer of understanding—and despair—shines through. "Masked parties, Savage parties, Victorian parties, Greek parties, Wild West parties . . . dull dances in London and comic dances in Scotland and disgusting dances in Paris—all that succession and repetition of massed humanity . . . those vile bodies. . . ." Waugh knew that a character who cannot resist making himself a part of every fad and folly of his time is already a satire. *Vile Bodies* is full of ridiculous characters leading ridiculous lives, and the results are hilarious. The results are also devastating: the characters scarcely seem to notice how ruined their lives are, but the reader recoils in genuine horror. And this is precisely the effect Waugh intended. In short, Waugh knew that the proper place for the completely modern man is in satire.

Gail Godwin seems not to understand what Waugh knew so well. Her rambling novel is the story of Cate, a complete, and aging, child of the Me Decade. Cate is the consummate Me. She wants only two things from life: honesty and total freedom to follow her own star. But since her only criterion for judging anything is whether or not it is good for her, she is incapable of honestly evaluating anything, least of all her own actions. This self-centeredness that allows her to see only as far as her own nose she regards not as indulgence, but as intelligence. Cate does not accept responsibility for any of the mistakes in her life. That, after all, would not be "fair to herself." Nor is she responsible for the future, since that is all up to "the pattern." But she does collect hints about the pattern: she regularly consults I Ching, and she divorced her first husband after receiving a "message" from a random line in a novel.

Every platitude, every stock episode from the Life of the Liberated Woman is here in nauseating excess. Everything that feminists insist will guarantee a woman a free and happy life is included. But here's the rub. Cate isn't happy. Peevish, bad-tempered, self-righteous, jealous, she bickers constantly with just about anyone who happens to be around. Selfish and self-indulgent, she is anything but adult, and certainly not free. Cate is a prisoner of her own stupidity. She has made being modern, being "free," being unattatched, the center of her life. As a result she has no center at all.

In the hands of a Waugh, Cate probably would have been a masterpiece of satire. Unfortunately there is nothing in this book to suggest that Ms. Godwin finds any of this in any way funny. There is no wit, no sarcasm, nothing but the blandest sort of storytelling. Godwin takes Cate seriously. How very sad this is. Godwin had an opportunity to do something important. She could have been a best-selling women novelist exposing modernity, as it is manifested in the feminist movement, as a false idol. And she could have been funny to boot. But Ms. Godwin seems incapable of drawing such a message from her characters. Just as Cate will not take responsibility for her life, Godwin refuses responsibility for her characters. She will not judge them, so the characters are out of her control. The problem is that just as one needs a moral perspective to tell right from wrong, one also needs a moral perspective to tell if something is funny or not. And if the author can't see what is funny or tragic about her characters, the reader certainly won't either.

" 'A Mother and Two Daughters' is . . . [a] spacious, harmonious book—an expansive and imaginative celebration of American life . . ."
—*New York Times Book Review*

". . . engrossing and deep."
—*Time*

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The only thing worthy of mention about *Three Women at the Water's Edge* is that Nancy Thayer has managed to write an entire novel in the pluperfect tense. We admit that this *is* funny. But it's a lot funnier if you don't have to read 300 pages of it. Actually, there is one more interesting thing about *Three Women.* The main outline of the plot is virtually the same as that of Godwin's novel. It was released at about the same time as Godwin's, and one of the book-jacket blurbs is by Godwin. So much for originality in the current state of arts and letters. Both Godwin and Thayer have succeeded in being thoroughly modern. Godwin has chronicled the pervasive vapidity of our times, but in refusing to make any judgement of it, she participates in it herself. Gail Godwin and Nancy Thayer are as modern as the Me Decade, and just as appealing. □

"Nancy Thayer has written a superb woman's book . . . 'Three Women at the Water's Edge' captures what it's like to be a woman in an age when none of the premises seem true and none of the definitions help to define womanhood."
—*Chicago Tribune*

On Economic Development & Delusions

Peter Bauer: *Equality, the Third World and Economic Delusion;* Harvard University Press; Cambridge, Massachusetts.

William Loehr and John Powelson: *The Economics of Development and Distribution;* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; New York.

by Grace Goodell

Professor Peter Bauer, for decades a lone conservative in the field of economic development, is at last joined by two scholars who, like him, condemn centralized government and espouse the free market as the most efficacious route to economic development. These two volumes complement one another—they also challenge each other. Their parting of the ways occurs when they consider whether development is mainly an economic matter or if it requires certain political foundations.

Professor Bauer's essays provide a critique of the ideological and psychological underpinnings of foreign aid: its recent history, the hypocrisy and opportunism of its sundry proponents and the damage (rather than benefits) which it inflicts on the Third World. With Savonarolan ardor Professor Bauer blames Third World poverty on both the governments and the peoples there. His heroes are the Chinese of Hong Kong who, in their "single-minded pursuit of making money," have progressed rapidly despite their colony's exceptional population growth and its lack of natural resources, political sovereignty, notable educational achievement, government planning or special investment incentives.

If this onslaught leaves the layman dizzied, he can find no more comprehensive, balanced and humane synthesis of what we do—and do not—know about capitalistic economic development than in Professors Loehr and Powelson's concise review. Like Professor Bauer's, this book is likely to make economists ill at ease because of its unique range—across centuries of human history East and West, across varied social-science disciplines as well as contemporary Western economics—and its commitment to freedom, to law, to the objective test of whether development policies actually work.

Although it is written as an economics text, Professors Loehr and Powelson's compendium introduces the reader to most major considerations in development theory and questions many of them. They demonstrate that many widely accepted policies based on government manipulation actually have no effect at all on poverty—or, worse yet, exacerbate the gap between the rich and the poor. After careful examination they find that measures for full employment rarely improve income distribution, that Third World governments themselves rather than corporations bear the blame for instituting capital-intensive technologies even when local labor is cheap, that land reform brings no benefits to the rural poor, that efforts to upgrade education often aggravate disparities in wealth by subsidizing middle-class university students while neglecting village and slum primary schools, that forgiveness of international debts would benefit the richest Third World countries instead of the poorest, since the latter are not the principal debtors anyway. Contrary to established dogma, Loehr and Powelson document the efficiency and responsiveness of the private market in Third World agriculture. They highlight numerous Third World studies seldom cited elsewhere: research on bureaucratic "harassment" of small businesses, for instance, and studies by the International Labor Organization itself (ILO) opposing minimum-wage regulations in poor countries.

Both volumes address macroeconomic questions of development policy, the demography of the "population explosion," and "personal" attributes which, though beyond the reach of economists, largely determine economic prosperity. Both denounce many of the assumptions, criteria and research methods of development economics. In distinct ways, both studies probe the dynamics of power which underpin contemporary debates over the distribution of wealth between nations as well as between classes *within* each Third World country. As such, they seem to have laid the foun-

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dations for a conservative theory of economic development. Beyond the substantial convergence of Bauer, Loehr and Powelson, though, looms the philosophical tension of their differences. What *is* the central problem of "economic development," and in what direction do we seek its solution? What is the role of politics in this field, and, at the core, what is the importance of the "distribution," or "equality," which charge these titles?

For Bauer, this question is twofold: Why are some people better off than others, and, can "aid" redistribute the wealth between them? His response focuses on the self-defeating consequences of robbing the rich to give to the poor and on the promise of thrift and enterprise enabling the poor to become wealthy on their own. Given freedom and incentives, individuals with these traits will prosper, so a firm but restrained government like Hong Kong's should insure an environment which nurtures enterprise. Ultimately he concludes that some people are better off than others because of "personal conduct, not external forces."

For Loehr and Powelson, the central question lies not in the flux of opportunities across a spectrum of relative prosperity, but rather in an absolute: the "overwhelming" burden of poverty. Thus while Bauer emphasizes class mobility, Loehr and Powelson try to understand stark poverty both subjectively and objectively—a quest that they treat with compassion. Like Bauer they, too, discuss personal attributes conducive to development. But, in contrast, they look for the causes of poverty in society-wide institutions rather than in the capacities of individuals. Unusual among economists, they perceive the importance of structures which mediate between individuals themselves or between individuals and the State: institutions which foster financial trust and group leverage, for instance, or "parallel governments" which guard against overly centralized power. To them, individual enterprise can be released *only* when people have first acquired for themselves the classical liberal safeguards against all governments' "propensity for power." In this respect they see development as being contingent upon factors external to the individual's personal conduct.

As a result of this difference of views on social organization, these volumes disagree even more radically about the nature and role of politics in the process of development. Because the society Bauer depicts comprises only (or mainly) individuals and the State, and because he (like the others) affirms the latent potential of the former, development therefore depends on wise and well-intentioned governors. Hence he is outraged by the Third World elites' cynical manipulation of our guilt and their countrymen's poverty for their own enrichment. "Politicization" in any instance Bauer sees as a deadening cancer caused by foreign aid, the major blight on economic progress which diverts the resources and attention of both the leaders and the poor away from "productive economic activity." His volume is an exposé of political crassness, the root evil in any society whose development hinges on enlightened government.

On the other hand, for Loehr and Powelson politics and political propaganda are facts of life, with or without foreign aid. Indeed, because this is true, effective leverage against power is a prerequisite for economic development. Like Bauer, they dismiss the rhetorical demands of the "North-South" debate; however, what they criticize is not the crassness of these demands but their futility. They would have the Third World harness their drive for political power by learning the bargaining principles which have served the poor in the West—beginning with a more realistic appraisal of what leverage they do have (*given* their dependence) and a more accurate grasp of how selectively and gradually reforms are gained.

As for politics *within* the developing nations, far from idealizing the colonial paternalism of Hong Kong's crown government, Loehr and Powelson laud the European peoples' fierce struggle for "liberalism"—freedom from restriction—throughout their history. Through their ever-persisting "politicization," they hammered out institutions which foster individual enterprise without reliance on government goodwill, institutions designed over time to protect against government (which often proves to be more a threat than an aid to enterprise). Thus they assert that political decentralization is a sine qua non for development. Their staunch acceptance of politics as integral to economics leads them to consider market economy and decentralized politics separately. In the final analysis they give priority to the latter, predicting the stagnation of certain free-market societies which do not decentralize, but successful development for certain decentralized socialist societies without a market economy.

The models of society which free-market economists offer us operate with more intellectual precision when left in a political vacuum. Virtually unique among economists, Loehr and Powelson take seriously realpolitik. This is why they and Bauer, economists of the same conservative bent, end up far apart. According to Loehr and Powelson, the "commercial liberalism" which brought about Europe's brilliant development

"[*Equality, the Third World, and Economic Delusion*] is the most irritating book I have read in a long time . . . a repetition of the stalest clichés of conservative economics."

—*Commonweal*

"Bauer's approach—in spite of its power and appeal—is fundamentally flawed . . ."

—*New York Review of Books*

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"could only have been possible with increasing balance of [political] leverage, in which coalitions bargained to obtain mutual privileges and to break down the monopolies of others." Bauer concludes just the opposite: "How misleading it is to think that the exclusion from political activity necessarily inhibits the economic prospects of a person or group."

The rift leads finally to the core of these authors' focus on development, i.e. economic equality (though surely a flexible and finely gradated hierarchy would be a more useful concept). For Bauer, equality is *the* delusion of development; indeed, its promotion often creates poverty. For Loehr and Powelson "sustained material well-being . . . can occur only with distributions tending towards equality," because "the degree of efficiency in a society depends on the degree of balance of leverage."

How can these views be reconciled? One aspect of their difference stems from the place each volume assigns to political and economic clusterings and to political life. If *individuals* are working within a system which offers no scope for politics, then everyone does begin from the same position and has at his disposal the same means for advancement. But if institutions and groups exist which vie with one another politically, then individuals may have very *unequal* opportunities, and the system could become polarized.

A second reason for difference is that they counter the same leftist ideology from contrasting directions: Bauer rejects leveling the rich to gain equality as both unnecessary and possibly counterproductive—hence, development with equality is impossible. Loehr and Powelson seek to disprove the accusation that capitalist development always makes the poor poorer to the benefit of the rich. This must not (and need not) happen, they say, because it would perpetuate poverty and extinguish political pluralism, the cornerstone of productivity—for them, equality is an imperative.

Conservatives affirm that Bauer's Horatio Alger lives—indeed, his dynamism abounds—in the Third World. But conservatives also wage war against political centralization and defend the West's broad middle class precisely because they recognize the enervating effects of too large a gap between economic and political levels in any society, however strong its institutions. In many Third World societies this gap is vast and the ladder spanning it narrow and precarious. Few of these societies has a heritage or any institutions to foster participatory politics which cut across socio-economic rankings, the political foundation which decisively complemented capitalist development in the West and Japan. Can we rest assured that in such a context capitalism alone—entrusted to a handful of powerful families in an a-political free market—will, over time, evolve a balance which safeguards sustained productivity and, indeed, the very fabric of society? □

Burning the Other Truth at the Liberal Stake

James Hennesey: *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States;* Oxford University Press; New York.

by Joseph A. Settanni

Thomas Jefferson once imperiously stated that if he would be permitted to enter Heaven only with a party of others, he would never care to go there. The flimsy diatribe struggling across the pages of *American Catholics* is based on Father Hennesey's antipathy for American spiritual individualism as it is reflected in society, politics, economics, and culture. His lamentations focus upon the historical experience of a particular religious community. He favors a communitarian celebration of Catholicism, as Henri de Lubac understands it.

Ironically, the foreword to the work, written by John Tracy Ellis, seems to have been composed for another book. Father Hennesey does not, as Ellis claims, follow the historical dictums of the late Christopher Dawson, but instead strongly contradicts Dawson's central observations about Catholic history. Dawson postulated the rule that Catholicism was great and effective whenever it opposed the ways and values of the world and offered a good alternative vision of life. Hennesey speaks of the successes of the Church in America in its adaptation to, and acceptance of, the present reality. He writes that the Church is "working out its salvation in and through this world." Not surprisingly, Andrew Greeley likes this book and recommends it highly. What could have been an important work, a major statement about Catholicism in America, remains merely a historical review about Catholics in a particular country. One lapse among many is the lack of a vigorously substantive exploration of church and state relations regarding aid to religious institutions for educational purposes. Hennesey neglects to mention that President Jefferson once authorized aid to Catholic missionary activities for the education of American Indians, though he does note other types of aid. Willmoore Kendall's ruminations about the supposed wall of separation between church and state, which historically is actually a very leaky sieve, would have been apropos.

Various events in the history of the United States, such as the War Between the States, are seen reflected in the Catholic attitudes toward them. Three distinct historical periods are covered: 1634 to 1829, called the "American" era; a section devoted to the immigrant experience; and "A Revolutionary Moment," the 1960's to the present. Hennesey's didactic position is that taken by

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Walter J. Ong in the 50's, with regard to the fact that by then Roman Catholicism was no longer an immigrant faith. The rebellion of the San Patricio battalion in the Mexican-American War is presented as a suitable analogy to the principled resistance to the Vietnam War. Hennesey claims that the 19th-century conflict was *also* an unjust war. It does not occur to him that before the bloody dictator Santa Ana reached Texas his forces had spent years violating any civil rights and liberty in five other Mexican provinces, inflicting upon Mexicans all possible atrocities and outright massacres. The John Birch Society is revealed as a major threat to domestic freedom, and Joseph R. McCarthy was really the devil masquerading as a U.S. Senator. All the hackneyed phraseology and clichés of American liberalism are put on parade. McCarthy is referred to as "a lifelong practicing Catholic," a statement that has the equivalent literary resonance of "card-carrying communist." The inordinate fear of communism, furthermore, persists in America into the 1980's, as the author observes; Polish Catholics and their own inordinate fears are not mentioned.

On a separate point, Orestes Augustus Brownson's impact upon American Catholicism is underappreciated, while Mary Harris "Mother" Jones receives almost three times as much space. For the 1960's, Hennesey approvingly notes that Pope John XXIII and Paul VI "abandoned *ritual* denunciation and initiated dialogue with communists" (emphasis added), and that Pope John, the "Maoist" pope to some, had an unpretentious common sense approach" toward life. The events of Vatican II are proclaimed in glowing terms as a tremendous *Revelation*. In fact, contrary to the earlier optimism of Michael Novak, Robert Hoyt, and others, the liturgical reforms did not bring forth a massive new awakening. Instead, freedom of conscience spread among Catholics from the conciliar decree made for non-Catholics; the increased role of the laity weakened church structure, as did episcopal collegiality; and no new sense of spiritual direction brought about more unity or a greater moral posture.

While Father Hennesey may see an outpouring of enthusiasm, others do not. Young Catholic men are not breaking down American seminary walls to get in and join the celebration of modernist Catholicism. On the other hand, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre was forced by Pope Paul to close his crowded seminary because the embarrassing appeal of orthodoxy and tradition was too strong.

"Few books on American Catholicism published in the last two decades have been more welcome than James Hennesey's . . . comprehensive, fact-filled . . . thorough research, incredible accuracy . . . a blend of scholarly excellence, literary grace, and intellectual integrity . . . church history at its best."

—*Commonweal*

Studies such as that done by Dean Kelly have shown that religion stressing authority and fundamentalism have recently been gaining strength in America while those preaching modernism are usually losing members. The post-World War II generation, including the Catholic youth of the United States, saw that the secular powers and values had no real answers with which to fill the spiritual void of consciousness. When eager and youthful minds turned toward what had been an authoritative institution confident of its mission, Pope John ironically announced that the Church *also* needed to ask questions. When willing intellects desired introspection, the floor of consciousness immediately collapsed under the weight of a proclaimed need for what was called "relevance." The Church Father Hennesey so reveres had committed an egregious blunder that contributed to the rise of cultism and related phenomena.

Certain contemporary phenomena have not as yet caught Father Hennesey's eye. As can be seen in the pages of publications such as the *New Oxford Review,* conservative Lutherans, many evangelicals, and traditionalist Catholics have more in common than do liberal and conservative Catholics. The Reverend Jerry Falwell counts numerous Catholics among his admirers, including those associated with Christendom College in Virginia, a traditionalist outpost. The American, modernist, liberationist-feminist celebration festival, which was formerly known as the Mass before references to the word "men" were ideologically expunged, inevitably degenerates to the significance of an eccentric happening. Hennesey's history ignores the discrete but vitally important intangibles inherent in the story of the Faith in this country. Why, for instance, did people like Brownson convert in the face of a hostile cultural environment? He does not mention Pope John Paul II's appeal for Catholic orthodoxy on issues such as abortion and contraception. The current pontiff seems to be playing a dirty trick on Father Hennesey's assumption regarding the irreversible radical trends of the last two decades. For him, the bulk of righteous struggle and holy anguish is revealed in the doings of the Catholic left, representatives of the communitarian Catholicism. The Catholic right, on the other hand, is generally presented as a group of scattered malcontents, hardened reactionaries, assorted crackpots, and misguided dissidents. In his basic presuppositions, he tolerates nothing that significantly deviates from the simplistic progressive and liberal consensus, favoring openness and dialogue with the secular world, modern philosophy or Marxism. The underlying orientation in thought, a mindset that tendentiously scurries about the edges of the text, is obvious through its omissions.

The distinctive difference between a good book and a work of true scholarship is often the author's ability to reach

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beyond the cold facts and dates of the text. There is no argument with most of Hennesey's facts *qua* facts. What would raise one's critical level of interest would be some fruitful insights and comprehensive conceptions. One such opportunity neglected relates to Father Hennesey's inability to make inspired linkages among ideas; this could have been done by forming an insightful observation upon religion and politics in American history. For instance, he never resolves the contradiction of his own acknowledgment of the fact that most Catholics tended to be Federalists, meaning conservatives, and his contention that the "hallmark of the Catholic community since the days of the Carrolls" from the 18th century to the Civil War was its Whig leadership.

As with the first Great Awakening prior to the Revolutionary War and the second one before the rise of Jacksonian democracy, religious changes of attitude and realignment in thinking patterns seem to precede political realignments in social and cultural patterns. If this is true, perhaps the McCarthy era was not so very anomalous after all. The same presently holds for both the New Right and the New Christian Right as it did for the New Left and the New Christian Left of the last two decades. Yet, what one usually hears from the mass media are grave announcements of shock and dismay about religious involvement in politics. Hennesey missed an important opportunity to creatively formulate some fundamental historical statements.

Much of his selective coverage of people and events may be disingenuous; silence, however, is still the best covert form of censorship, and liberalism practices it well. Vocal conservative opposition is summarily ignored through careful omission. If he accepted the text at face value the uninformed reader would certainly miss any chorus not in tune with modernist vibrations. Absolutely nothing is said of Ross J.S. Hoffman, Thomas P. Neill, Martin Hillenbrand, Paul Levak, and Francis J. Boland, who were writing from the 1930's to the 1950's. Wilson, Simon, Harrigan, Hallowell, Bozell, Molnar, and Wilhelmsen, who carried the opposition through the 1960's to the present, are also missing. These Catholic conservative writers do not exist for Hennesey; they are obviously not part of his comfortable, communitarian coffee klatch.

Hennesey blandly concludes with what he considers a good sampling of typical, grass-roots Catholic opinion. It was collected "on the upper east side of Manhattan" in New York City in 1976. It is offered as being indicative, or very representative, of national thinking and trends. Where he got this weird notion that the Upper East Side is representative of anything besides itself is anybody's guess. Among his many strange assertions, this is perhaps the most bizarre. But the anger *and* anguish of what may be called two Catholicisms in America has been virtually ignored. The most obvious impact of Vatican II upon the United States remains undiscussed because the topic can burn both body and soul. On the one side is Father Greeley, a parish priest/sociologist/relativist, advocating majority rights regarding such things as contraception, sterilization, and a bisexual godhead. In opposition there are those who believe in Catholic orthodoxy, tradition and mortal sin. If *American Catholics* does become the standard volume on the subject as a blurb on the cover promises, one wonders if there will be enough Catholics around to read a second and final edition. □

In the Mail

The Family in the Modern World: A Symposium on Pope John Paul II's **Familiaris Consortio edited by Carl A. Anderson and William J. Gribbin; The American Family Institute; Washington, DC.** The role of the family in contemporary society is examined and discussed by experts including Allan C. Carlson, James Hitchcock, James V. Schall, and others. It starts with the Pope's apostolic letter, but moves in various directions.

Learning to Live with Evil **by Theodore Plantinga; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co; Grand Rapids, MI.** The author accepts the reality of evil, describes it, then provides a practical though existential approach for living in the fallen world.

Evil in Modern Myth and Ritual **by Richard Stivers; The University of Georgia Press; Athens.** This text does not provide a metaphysics or a theology of evil, but rather examines the social manifestations of evil in things from advertising to deviant behavior.

A Variorum Edition of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, Volume V, The Minor Poems, **Part I, edited by George B. Pace and Alfred David; University of Oklahoma Press; Norman.** This finely crafted examination of 14 of Chaucer's shorter works provides a highly detailed basis from which to perceive Chaucer's development as poet, satirist, and commentator.

BusinessGram **edited by Joseph R. McAuliffe; BG Publishing; Bowling Green, OH.** This newsletter, published 11 times a year, examines business from a Christian perspective, including subjects like management, investment, and morality.

Understanding Reaganomics **by The Heritage Foundation's Economics Staff; The Heritage Foundation; Washington, DC.** This collection of essays provides an overview of various aspects of current economic policy and covers deficits, inflation, interest rates, defense spending, and more.

Verses Vice Verses **by Richard L. Loughlin; Harian Creative Press; Ballston Spa, NY.** This collection of verse ranges from the whimsical to the witty, from the sublime to the silly.

The Magellan Heart **by Don A. Sears; Harian Creative Press; Ballston Spa, NY.** This poetic journey is, in part, the travails of a man whose wife committed suicide; it details, and is a part of, his struggle to come to grips with it.

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Portable Reagan

Lee Edwards: *Ronald Reagan: A Political Biography;* Revised edition; Nordland Publishing International; Houston.

***The Reagan Wit;* Edited by Bill Adler with Bill Adler, Jr.; Caroline House Publishers; Aurora, Illinois.**

by John Shelton Reed

Other readers will have to draw the political lessons from Lee Edwards's biography of Ronald Reagan. It looks to me as if his first term as President is following pretty closely the script of his first term as governor of California—not what some of us had hoped for, but better than his predecessor by a long shot. I came to Edwards's book to see what I might learn about what sort of man Reagan is. Is he really the neo-Babbitt, country-club yahoo that Ms. Joan Didion implied he is when she revealed to *Esquire* readers that the then-new California governor's mansion contained—a *wet bar?* If so, so what? Can we separate taste from intelligence from principle?

The portrait of Reagan that emerges from this book is not reassuring, but the problem may be with the portrait, not with the subject. The book is, as its subtitle indicates, a "political biography," a chronicle of events in the political life of our President—that is, just one damn thing after another. The result, surely unintended, is a picture of someone to whom things just happen. Nowhere do we get a sense of Reagan as a conscious agent, weighing alternatives, choosing one course of action rather than another. Albert Jay Nock wrote once that, "Whatever a man may do or say, the most significant thing about him is what he thinks; and significant also is how he came to think it, why he continued to think it, or if he did not continue, what the influences were which caused him to change his mind." Biographers, in my view, should have those words framed on their walls, if not tattooed on their chests. Of course, there is no evidence in Edwards's book that his subject thinks at all, so he hasn't much to explain. Reagan appears, in this book, to proceed by reflex—good reflex, to be sure, but unconsidered. Passions are absent, too—even ambition. The result is a veritable Gerald Ford. The figures around Reagan, including his wife and children, are also strangely colorless, indeed, hardly mentioned.

This is not the type of biography Reagan deserves—indeed, no one deserves one of this caliber—although it will undoubtedly be useful to whoever writes the right biography, as the skeleton on which some flesh can be hung. This is essentially a work of hagiography: its hero makes no mistakes—or almost none. When he does, Edwards doesn't dwell on it: Jane Wyman is mentioned once and is otherwise a nonperson. On one other occasion, Edwards presents an error: when Reagan responded to a hostile question by denying angrily that he was a bigot and then walking out. It is a measure of the book's problems that it is not at all clear why this was not an appropriate and dignified response. Allen Tate once began a biography of Robert E. Lee, but gave it up in frustration and perplexity. Lee was a great man, but just too simple, too unreflective (too unlike Allen Tate). It is not clear whether Edwards had a similar subject on his hands, or if he simply did not plumb the man's depths. It will take another Reagan book to tell us where the rest of him is.

One thing that Ronald Reagan demonstrated when he was shot is that he is a man of some courage and humor, who doesn't need a ghostwriter to come up with some good one-liners. My favorite came when Lyn Nofziger told the President that he'd be happy to hear that the government was running normally. "What makes you think I'd be happy about that?" Reagan shot back. But face it: Reagan is no La Rochefoucauld—or even Kissinger—and while a book called *The Reagan Wit* is not as preposterous an idea as one called, say, *The Nader Wit,* it will have to be padded if it is not to invite snide comparisons to *Italian War Heroes* and other apocryphal short volumes. The Adlers' skinny book, with lots of white space and more than a dozen full-page photographs, still has to dig pretty deep, and it does the President no service. Some of this stuff wasn't meant to be funny—it's just well-phrased, in a *Reader's Digest* "Toward More Picturesque Speech" kind of way—and some of it was meant to be funny, but fails.

Surely this book is premature. After all, the man has a few more years in which to be witty, and from the look of things, he is going to need his sense of humor. Lord knows, the book could have used additional material. Why, one could reasonably ask, did Adler *pere et fils* rush this into print? In the promotional material that came with the book, we are told that the younger Adler is "a foreign policy lobbyist for Americans for Democratic Action." The pieces start to fall into place. Subtle, these liberals. □

John Shelton Reed is professor of sociology and American studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

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COMMENDABLES

The Promised Land

Jervis Anderson: ***This Was Harlem;*** Farrar, Straus & Giroux; New York.

by Gary S. Vasilash

The verb tense in the title of this book is critical. Harlem, though it continues to exist, is now little more than what can be found in other major metropolises: an area where the lights once shined long into the night; where the sounds that could be heard escaping through swinging doors excited the air; where the light bulbs are now broken and doors secured with sheets of plywood, two-by-fours, and padlocks. In the 19th century there were such places, primarily in the West. Fancy towns. But then the railroad didn't come through as promised or the silver lode wasn't as mammoth as had been expected, so the towns simply ceased to exist in as meaningful a way. The lively sounds became only an echo. Harlem isn't exactly a ghost town; people still live there. Indeed, there is something of a revival going on there as upper-class white folks are starting to or considering the possibility of reviving some of the grand living quarters in Harlem that have fallen into disrepair and moving in. In one sense, we may be witnessing Vico's spiral: pre-1900 Harlem was essentially an all-white area. Blacks began to move in because they weren't wanted in other areas, and although they weren't popular in Harlem at the century's start, the hostility was less venomous ("white flight" was the more typical response) and the housing much better than that which existed elsewhere at the time. Today housing is dear in New York City, so. . . .

The name "Harlem" is now synonymous with an aspect of black culture and society, just as "Motown" is more than a portmanteau word for Detroit, but rather a term that is used to characterize a certain sound. Harlem, as a geographic entity, became the area uptown of 110th Street, wherever there were significant assemblages of blacks. For them, Harlem was "the Promised Land." So said Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., pastor of the community's Abyssinian Baptist Church. While most don't conceive of the Promised Land with regard to considerations of real estate (e.g., property values, rent, etc.), those considerations were very much a part of the migration uptown from the turf known as the Tenderloin, as well as from locations across the country and even the Caribbean. Once the conglomeration of blacks in the area was effected, a number of things—many of them wonderful—started happening. There was crime and violence, typical of many urban groupings. There was prejudice: black and white; Northern and Southern blacks; domestic and foreign-born blacks. Given the conditions of harmony, conflict, and a group of fairly similar people, a flowering of art, the performing variety in particular, occurred. It is something special in the history of America, the country that has always been searching for native traditions. Like something of an archaeologist, Jervis Anderson has carefully prepared excavations. He shows what Harlem once was.

Harlem was the source of many things. There they were dancing the Texas Tommy and the Lindy Hop, the former very earthy and the latter picked up by even upper-class whites—who also attended the Cotton Club. That club and the Savoy once reverberated with the sounds of Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Art Tatum, Eubie Blake, Fats Waller, Willie (the Lion) Smith—and the list can stretch on with names that echo like a jazz riff. Ragtime, or "syncopated rhythms," as James Europe preferred to call it, was on native soil in Harlem, where it was played and finessed by Scott Joplin. Among the actors that the area can claim are Charles Gilpin and Paul Robeson, two men who brought Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones* and *All God's Chillun Got Wings* to life. Then there was Langston Hughes and the rest of the writers who are now carefully examined in postgraduate classes under the heading "The Harlem Renaissance." In the 20's and 30's Harlem could stand shoulder to shoulder with Paris and Berlin. Few other American cities or enclaves can be the object of such a claim. □

Mr. Vasilash is associate editor of the Chronicles.

Measure for Measure

Louis Auchincloss: ***Watchfires;*** Houghton Mifflin; New York.

In Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic" the watchfires of the Union camps reveal the presence of God. In Louis Auchincloss's latest novel, these same fires illuminate only fallible men and women, but the revelation is worthwhile nonetheless. Indeed, what Auchincloss shows most clearly in his portrayal of elite New York society during the Civil War are the devastating human consequences of any obsession with glorious visions which obscures the terrestrial demands of more immediate realities. Thus while the novel's protagonist, Dexter Fairchild, plays the role of the white knight defending the abstract sanctity of the institution of marriage, he falls into adultery with his wife's sister. Similarly longing for a role of "high seriousness," Dexter's wife Rosalie becomes an angel of compassion to fallen Union soldiers—after leaving a distraught husband to fend for himself and their two sons.

The professed high idealism of large social movements does not appear any more attractive on the canvas of Auchincloss's fiction: abolitionists' philosophic love for slaves proves little more than a cover for their hatred of slaveholders; radical Republicans seem more concerned with punishing white Southerners than with enfranchising blacks; suffragettes evince at least as much mean-spirited resentment towards men as genuine concern about the political status of women. Perhaps there is a measure of cynicism shaping Auchincloss's narrative, but there is much more of sanity. His intent is clearly not to endorse slavery or to repudiate black or female suffrage, but simply to dramatize the primacy of one's responsibilities to one's immediate family. Rosalie therefore discovers true compassion not as a nurse tending to the needs of faceless wounded, but as a forgiving wife

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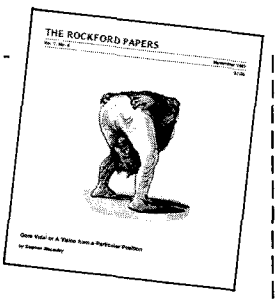

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returning to her penitent husband. Dexter's son Fred likewise finds his real courage not under rebel fire during the war, but years later in a quiet resolve to ignore his wife's penurious recommendation that he deny his aging father his costly office privileges. It's not the sort of thing to inspire hallelujahs, but the affirmation of the values of the hearth resounds to its own subtle harmony. (BC) □

In Praise of Confusion

Barbara Villet: ***Blood River: The Passionate Saga of South Africa's Afrikaners and of Life in Their Embattled Land;*** Everest House; New York.

Seldom does an author deserve plaudits for creating confusion, but for her work in writing this book, Barbara Villet does. Confusion has become a valuable commodity in any analysis of the current situation in South Africa because prevailing dogmas of liberal journalists have made objectivity so rare. The ruling Afrikaners, according to their popular representation, are singularly oppressive villains whose apartheid policies constitute the essential cause of suffering among blacks not only in South Africa but also—in some inexplicable way—throughout sub-Saharan Africa. In the liberal view, the solution is as simple as the problem: immediate majority rule by the blacks. Drawing upon her wide experience in South Africa and deep understanding of its history, Mrs. Villet reduces this reassuringly tidy and simplistic set of beliefs to a shambles of baffling ironies and perplexing ambiguities.

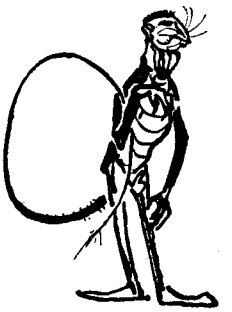
The Afrikaners *have* often been oppressive in their treatment of blacks, but this oppression derives not from any peculiar malignity, but from a complex tangle of fervent Calvinism, geographical and historical accidents, and their own past subjugation under imperialistic Britain. Apartheid *has* imposed unfair hardship upon blacks, yet South African blacks enjoy better education and a higher standard of living than blacks in any other African nation. Black majority rule *might* solve some of South Africa's problems; however, because most African blacks are accustomed to tribal rather than democratic ideals, experiments in democracy in other African nations have often been violent and shortlived. Moreover, Afrikaners who know how British expansionists ruthlessly manipulated the blacks against them for the sake of mineral wealth are understandably fearful of Soviets and Cubans now maneuvering to do the same. Surely South Africa is, as an Afrikaner interviewed by Mrs. Villet declared, "the puzzle of the earth." It would be nice if Mrs. Villet could offer a solution to this puzzle, but her kind of honest evaluation of the number and intricacy of the pieces must certainly precede any successful effort to put them together. □

Between the Dustcover and the Deep Blue Sea

M.E. Bradford: ***A Worthy Company: Brief Lives of the Framers of the United States Constitution;*** Plymouth Rock Foundation; Marlborough, New Hampshire.

If ever there was one, this is a book which must not be judged by its cover—or at least not by its dustcover. Prepared by its zealous publisher, this dustcover militantly exclaims that this book establishes "the predominant influence of the Christian faith on the founding of the nation" by proving that "50 (and perhaps 52) of the 55 Framers of the United States Constitution were Christians. Not humanists, not Deists, not agnostics—*Christians!*" Such billing is deceptive: the table of contents which labels each of the Framers by religious affiliation tells the reader almost as much about their devotional attitudes as the sketches which follow. It is indeed amusing that the publisher is so eager to roll up the historical score for *Christians!* that among the 50 Framers so labeled is an Episcopalian described by Professor Bradford as "an unscrupulous, charming opportunist, a great host and giver of parties, but devious nonetheless."

Actually, Bradford's intent, as explained in his introduction,



is primarily to explore "the individual Framer's constitutional theory, [and] the variety of Union which he hoped to see created," while merely "touch-[ing] upon the professional, personal, economic, intellectual and religious life" of these men. Perhaps those attracted by the evangelistic cover will be disappointed that Dr. Bradford's book is so little concerned with New Jerusalem, but those who want to understand better the terrestrial visions of the Constitution shapers will find this a worthwhile study. Though brevity necessitates some simplification (Madison is treated in 14 pages; Washington in 10), Bradford's grouping of the Framers into two classes of Antifederalists and four classes of Federalists, on the basis of their attitudes towards the powers to be granted to the federal government, seems both sound and illuminating. What Bradford most clearly illustrates is that almost all the Framers of the Constitution were concerned that they not create a federal government which would impose *any* orthodoxy upon localities. Most of them shared Roger Sherman's belief that since "diversity" provided "security against the abuse of power," it would "not comport with American interests if the Federal government were to interfere with the government of particular states." At the time, this meant allowing the Southern states to practice their "peculiar institution" of slavery and permitting Connecticut and Massachusetts to maintain Congregationalism as their official religion. The notion of a teleocratic national government enforcing a uniform set of theoretical "rights" was, Bradford demonstrates, foreign to virtually all of them. Today, they undoubtedly would be horrified at the way liberal legislators, judges, and bureaucrats have subsequently imposed their own vision of a secularized egalitarianism upon America by using the phrases "general welfare" and "necessary and proper" as sledgehammers for demolishing the 9th and 10th Amendments specifically intended to protect local autonomy. (BC) □

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IN FOCUS

Our Daily Metaphysics

Samuel C. Florman: ***Blaming Technology: The Irrational Search for Scapegoats;*** St. Martins Press; New York.

by Robert A. Rogowsky

"The blaming of technology," Samuel Florman writes, "starts with the making of myths—most importantly, the myth of the technological imperative and the myth of the technocratic elite. In spite of the injunctions of common sense, and contrary to the evidence at hand, the myths flourish." *Blaming Technology* is a valiant, though perhaps quixotic, attempt to inject common sense into a variety of issues that, loosely connected, constitute the public debate about technology. The windmills of fear constructed by latter-day Luddites are so prominent and so pervasive that a voice of reason may appear peculiar, almost amusingly out of touch.

Technological progress, like any change in society, imposes costs. As far back as colonial times, for instance, smallpox infection was a threat from the very vaccination intended to prevent the disease. There are the less obvious costs, too: fear of being replaced; fear of alienation in a mechanized world; fear of continually losing ground in a world of exploding knowledge; fear of losing control of one's life in a world where knowledge means control. All very real fears. But they are often based on ignorance and misunderstanding; that is, they may be irrational or misplaced. Technology is a convenient target for our fears and frustrations about developments that we as individuals cannot control—and sometimes can hardly understand. In the process of cognitive dissonance, technological innovation becomes a convenient scapegoat.

With a wealth of facts and figures to back his argument, Mr. Florman systematically attacks the myths and the fears, putting both into perspective. The so-called "technocracy" of engineers and other "technocrats," for instance, he exposes as a fantasy. Power in industry and government rests not with technocrats, but with lawyers and accountants. Less than 1% of the professionals on Capitol Hill are engineers. The much-maligned Corps of Engineers is not a military juggernaut bent on destroying the environment, but simply a civil-engineering agency through which Congress studies, evaluates, and executes public-works projects. Though it may be overzealous, it is directed and controlled by the purse strings of the Public Works Committees of Congress.

The nuclear angst is also put into perspective. A study commissioned by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission estimated that the chance of an individual dying from nuclear accident in any one year is 5 billion to one; from lightning the odds are 2 million to one. In contrast, 150 coal miners die each year from accidents. Standing for 24 hours a day for one year on the edge of a nuclear plant site would expose a person to one-fourth of the millirems of radiation of a single dental X-ray; one four-hundredth of the millirems of a single gastrointestinal-tract X-ray. Statistically, the odds of being injured while driving around a plant site are vastly higher than a radioactivity-related injury at a nuclear facility. But the angst lies with the latter.

Despite the author's cogent response to the many myths that enter the technology debate, the reader is left wondering precisely why this irrational fear of technology is so pervasive and persistent. Antitechnology, as Mr. Florman shows, is part of the liberal agenda, a propagandist's paradise, a target for pacifists, conservationists, consumer advocates, unions, feminists, and the small-is-good crowd. Combined with the influence of the liberal media, there is a formidable force arrayed against technological progress. Perhaps liberals fear that in a technological society, power will swing to the controllers of technology. Such a notion has little basis in history, of course, but the liberal argument does not require reason or experience. The rapid progress of technology increases uncertainty about the future. Uncertainty creates anxiety and anxiety is not a logical experience. It is an emotional one.

Michael Novak offered a rather frightening insight in a recent issue of *National Review,* (August 6, 1982) on the dovish position of many American Catholic bishops. Novak sees their opposition to nuclear arms as "a spiritual conversion, not a logical experience." Perhaps many liberals' opposition to technological progress has the same basis—it is an act of faith. And as such, it is by definition impervious to reason. Florman's exercise in logic will undoubtedly have no influence on such "converts." We can only wait hopefully for them to deconvert.

Dr. Rogowsky is an economist with the Federal Trade Commission.

Hesse Out of Haight-Ashbury

Hermann Hesse: ***Pictor's Metamorphoses;*** Farrar, Straus & Giroux; New York.

What's wrong with talking chairs and grumbling stoves? Samuel Taylor Coleridge defended the fanciful elements in his works, claiming that the poet has the privilege of employing things supernatural to convey a message or evoke a sentiment from the reader. Hermann Hesse is certainly entitled to the same apology. *Pictor's Metamorphoses,* an array of fanciful tales—some written by Hesse as a child—is as entertaining as it is instructive. Fantasy here is a backdrop for larger lessons; the magical setting gives a moral dimension to Hesse's heroes. In "Pictor's Metamorphoses," a magical stone entices Pictor into making a wish which he comes to lament. His wish, to become a tree, results in his isolation from nature and the natural transformations which go on around him—a state which Coleridge called life-in-death. A young maiden, however, falls in love with Pictor and, wishing to become one with him, is transformed into a lovely bough, an extension of Pictor. The two, now one, emerge from life-in-death and re-enter the natural order.

Although he probes a range of human situations and sentiments—from brotherly love to the frustration of the artist—Hesse strives to make his lessons

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universal, examines archetypal tendencies and patterns in generations of storytelling, and reestablishes the forgotten truth that goodness and justice are timeless. (JM) □

Waste of Money

Awfully Unlike Austen

Joan Juliet Buck: ***The Only Place to Be;*** Random House; New York.

When great writers die, some arrangement ought to be made permitting them to take their names with them. Left behind, they are often shamelessly abused by publishers eager to promote second-rate authors with incredibly unwarranted comparisons whose falsity can never be justly denounced by the maligned departed. In the case of *The Only Place to Be,* the genius traduced is Jane Austen, imputed by the dustcover to have been "reincarnated" in the person of Joan Juliet Buck. Austen will come back as a cow first. Imagine Austen, whose novels brilliantly explore the nuances of conversations, manners, and values of cultured British gentility, creating a work depicting churlish movie stars, journalists, and gangsters whose mouths are filled with profanity, whose hearts ache alternately with petty vanity, lust, and ennui and whose nights (and days) are spent in perverse sex.

Ms. Buck does command a modicum of writing skill, even a measure of wit and perceptiveness, but what she utterly lacks is precisely that which makes Austen's art immortal: meaningful ethical vision. Whereas Austen measures the proud stupidity of a Collins or the calculating unscrupulousness of a Wickham against a finely gradated standard of normalcy and morality, Buck's portrayal of the emptiness of the lives led by *all* of her main characters seems animated by little more than skeptical cynicism. Her protagonist concludes at age seven that eating, like all other human activities, is merely a pointless exercise in redundancy, and the course of life and thought that Ms. Buck allows her never seriously challenges that pessimistic view. Those who hold radically different outlooks, those with religious convictions or bourgeois morals, appear only as caricatures. *Were* Austen alive today, one suspects that she would tell Ms. Buck what one minor character tells her protagonist: "You know, you're intelligent, but I don't think it will help you." (BC) □

Liberal Culture

Would You Buy an Objective Poll from That Man?

Strict objectivity is to the pollsters what virginity was to the knight-errant: to both of them they are their pride and their armor. The latter couldn't fight for an ideal without the purity of say, heart, the former without the same quality of his data. Thus, editorializing is to the pollster the same as carnal temptation was to Sir Lancelot. Yet, speaking at the Church Center in New York City to a peculiar congregation dedicated to boosting a nuclear freeze, this was what Mr. Louis Harris, the crusading pollster, had to say:

> Something dramatic and highly important has happened to public opinion in America just over the past year. An urgent, dedicated hunger for peace in a nuclear era has literally overtaken our people. The deep desire for peace has always been there. The urgency is occasioned by the dread realization that humanity could well be wiped out by a nuclear war, not just at some vague point in the future, but at any time. And anytime could be now.

If that's not editorializing, and with a distinctly liberal/left verbiage to boot, we do not know what is. *Village Voice,* the organ of neo-Bolshevism, reported that Mr. Harris had "enthusiastic listeners." Who were they? A specific coalition of disarmament groups. What groups? Why, these were people who run, or endow with money, outfits like the Institute for Policy Studies, The National Lawyers Guild, the Stern Fund, the Rubin Foundation, *Counter Spy* newsletter, Stewart Mott's Fund for Peace, assorted communist front groups, the Brothers Berrigan Ploughshares Fund, Clergy and Laity Concerned, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom—they all were guests of the Rockefeller Family Fund, which was the main sponsor of the meeting. The chief objective of that assembly was to articulate warnings about nuclear-arms control and to promote peace issues. That those warnings sounded just like TASS's warnings on the same subject apparently bothered neither the distinguished financiers nor Mr. Harris. Would you buy an objective (?) poll on those issues from that gentleman?

Stalking the Big O

For years, some women have been trying to find a sure-fire approach for achieving what is euphemistically termed "making the earth move," Various approaches, from the Sadean to the more common garden variety, have been and are being attempted. An enterprising group

is searching for such women through the classified section of (where else?) *Village Voice.* The ad claims that through mere "participation in paper & pencil University research [*sic*]," the end of the rainbow can be reached. The paper and pencils concern us. The circumstance that *VV,* the organ of muckraking sensualists, is the messenger of this happy news makes the announcement as valuable as the same paper's support for New York politicians. □

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Irreverence of Things Past or the Best-Selling Void & The Traps of Well-Intentioned Cross-Breeding

A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy; Written and directed by Woody Allen; An Orion Picture.

On September 29, 1662, Samuel Pepys watched a performance by the King's company of *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* His terse characterization: "The most insipid, ridiculous play that I ever saw in my life." His first operative term, insipid, can be well applied to Woody Allen's Film, *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy,* for it is the most mawkish of his works to date. But perhaps that's his objective. Allen is at a difficult point in his career, perhaps one that he has, with unconscious deliberation, gotten himself into. Allen was born in 1935, and although he shows signs of age, he still carries himself as a bespectacled young man in search of meaning—or Meaning—to say nothing of a revelatory one-night stand.

Allen has a natural ability to make people laugh. First a nightclub performer, he ventured into writing and then film. Still he made people laugh with what are typically termed "zany" comedies. On and on he went through various roles. It might seem that as a result of this productive outpouring there would be progression. But no, at the end of *Manhattan* (1979) there was still Woody Allen, boyish comedian, *Annie Hall* (1977) and its parcel of Oscars notwithstanding. Sudden transformation of character was attempted twice, once before *Manhattan* with *Interiors* (1978), and once immediately after with *Stardust Memories* (1980). He tried to become a "serious" filmmaker. No good. Allen performed in those attempts as acceptably as another American character that carries the same moniker: Woody Woodpecker. Both are appreciated for their silliness rather than their depth; they entertain through light, farcical humor. Woody Allen is forever to be for moviegoers what he is, who he is: Woody—not Woodrow or Mr.—Allen.

Consider his situation. He is a comic. But now there are many more who are vying for not exactly his spot, but one awfully close—Steve Martin, Bill Murray, Dan Ackroyd. The classroom is filling up. Allen is at his best doing one thing: his classmates pull chairs out from

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In *Village Voice,* which proudly represents all subcultural aberrations, one could find an ad under the heading "Woody Allen Dreams": in it a potential author solicits interviews with people who have dreamed about Woody Allen. Sounds like a perfect obiter dictum on the current dementia of the culturati: a caricature of deification—the apotheosis of a twerp. It has something to do with our time's inability to distinguish between a comedian and a comic. In the past, the former endeavored to express the endless and unfathomable variations of human ill-adjustment to reality; the latter's quest always was and is to be just funny. And to be funny, all he has to do is to put into operation the mental or linguistic jargon of his time or place. That's exactly what the work of Mr. Allen amounts to. With the exception of *Love and Death,* the only movie in which the interrelation between film and literature was a source of some intellectual introspection and amusement, Mr. Allen's movies are compendiums of an updated, pseudohighbrow patois endemic to the urban, white-collar middlebrows with college educations and obligatory subscriptions to quasi-cultural magazines. The routine cerebral equipment of a specimen—male or female—of that social group is a composite of "intellectual" directives from *People, Psychology Today, Rolling Stone* and *New York* magazines, with moral impulses appropriated from *Time* and the "Living," or "Style," sections of large metropolitan dailies. By that frame of mind, Mr. Allen's funniness is equated with paradigmatic sensibility, if not with the human condition itself, at the same time being worthy only of an endless, ecstatic cackle.

What strikes me in his latest accomplishment is, first and foremost, the sordidness of the title. The juxtaposition of words "sex" and "comedy" carries something insistently vulgar, especially in light of what has happened to the former during the last 20 years. The notion of comic sex conveys some kind of debasement rather than exhilaration, but that's what Mr. Allen seems to be after: his verbal taste seems to be so anesthetized that he appears not to be able to connect an English noun to an adjective which expresses what he wishes to show without resorting to the most trivialized catchall term of our time. The fact that he tries to attach a semiotic platitude and vernacular ugliness to a Shakespearean allusion proves that "twerpiness" is still at the core of Mr. Allen's creative imperative.

His construction this time was supposed to be a pastoral romp in a post-*belle epoque* style: the frailty of human sensual propensities and their charms. What materializes on screen is an empty and uninspiring anecdote about sexual maneuvers performed by three couples during a weekend in the country. The featured characters are three men, who are rendered with a skill of a provincial caricaturist, and three women—a liber-

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ated one, a nympho, and a respectable but not spotless housewife—clipped anachronistically from the pages of *Redbook,* or *Playgirl,* whose sketched attitudes are quite devoid of any depth. After a hot summer day of pseudopoetical surrealistic frolics, not one of them feels sweaty or sleepy, is afflicted by heartburn or boredom, or needs a moment of solitary musing—as happens to even the greatest champions of the idyll: Dafnis and Chloe, or Hermia and Lysander from the original. Thus banality chases banality in an endless stream of loquacity that says nothing. There's a Mendelssohn score and artsy impressionistic visualness of photography thrown into the brew. This all to celebrate Mr. Allen, a comic freed from struggling with the enmities of being, as Keaton had to do, or formulating the metaphors for the absurd, as Groucho Marx was fond of doing. Were Mr. Allen to put all his movies together in a giant, nonstop screening, the viewer would notice little reason for interruption or separate titles: Mr. Allen's monologue would run smoothly, always the same, always on the level of "How-to" psychological manuals and best-selling sex almanacs, never about emotions, always about emotional warts, never about life's adversities and misfortunes, always about its inconveniences. Not long ago, Mr. Allen gave an interview in which he expounded his firmly held political beliefs. The sentences sounded as if they had been cut out of editorials in the tabloids.

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under each other; he does it to the teacher. He sticks with Bergman, *Smiles of a Summer Night* (1955). As a contributor to *The New Yorker,* Allen is no literary slouch, so he goes back to Shakespeare's trifling comedy and throws in Mendelssohn for good measure. Steve Martin may go for the cinematic pastiche with his *Pennies from Heaven* and *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid,* but Allen is still the master at hijinks, as he shows here. He couldn't make another *Take the Money and Run* or he would be hung from the lamp post outside of Elaine's. Pseudo-Bergman wouldn't play. So what he did in his most recent films is pull the chairs out from under everyone —including himself. It isn't particularly hilarious; indeed in some cases dull. It strikes a mean at vapid. But now Allen is positioned to make Woody Allen films once again. I think he has found his Meaning. His search didn't take him through the typical Hollywood route—alcoholism or something worse—just through a couple of bad movies. He's back where he started which, considering the up-and-comers, isn't bad at all.

—*Stephen Macaulay*

* * *

***An Officer and a Gentleman;* Written by Douglas Day Stewart; Directed by Taylor Hackford; Paramount.**

Outside of agriculture it's rather seldom that one comes up with a successful hybrid creation—whether in politics, business or the arts. The authors of *An Officer and a Gentleman* tried and failed—and not very honorably. A stylistic exercise in crossing modern, smirky, cinematic naturalism (for which a sex act is no longer an event of any consequence) with the old formula in which sexual reality was always put into a chiaroscuro of discretion and allusion could not and did not work. It is apparent that, nowadays, if a director wishes to construct a story in which a sexual fact *has* some moral and existential effect, the contemporary style of insouciant, offhand explicitness is a deterrent to convincing the viewer that events on the screen have weight and importance for human feelings and lives.

What the authors of *An Officer* want to tell us is the story of a young man who desires to lift himself from the condition of a street-battered punk to a higher station in life. His chosen lever of upward mobility is the military school for Navy pilots. Here we enter the hallowed grounds of the old Hollywood *Bildungsroman,* where military schools are either academes or incubators of the best in manhood; that's where patriotism, courage, idealism, character virtues, tenacity, uncompromising honesty were engendered, inculcated, polished. In this respect, the protagonist of *An Officer* moves smoothly among the correct conventions, neither diminishing nor enriching them—a pleasant surprise in our era of the idiotic demolition of convention. We are soberly aware that his desire to succeed in naval aviation is not so much a result of patriotism but the evidence of his need to "realize" himself as a human being; however, even this much of affirmative intentions is vague, left to surmise, unstated either declaratively or dramatically—although his closest friend during the training mentions "values." So, finally, we assess him according to his sex life—and what happens here is an exercise of modern grossness presented as realism, which proves the author's bondage to trivial and ultimately naive and banal simplemindedness.

As long as military schools exist—anywhere, anytime—girls in the area will be crucial components of reality. Cadets meet girls and something happens. Centuries before the feminist free-love concept, there was a lot of lovemaking of all degrees in those environments, but with one ironclad rule: if a girl wanted "fun" or "good times" she jumped right into bed; if a girl wanted a ring—and most of them wanted just that—then that's where literature began, and the probing of what constitutes sincerity, love, hypocrisy or subterfuge became the staple of fiction, drama and movies. What the working-class girls in *An Officer* unabashedly want is to get ahead in life through solid wedlock, but the scriptwriter and director let them have sex on the first date, which makes any further

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divagations on love and marriage either silly or phony, or both. This is not wartime, when a brief erotic episode—or so it has been argued many times—has some moral and existential justification. What the girls in *An Officer* seem to be motivated and guided by is the Condé Nast Publications cum *Ms.* magazine cum ERA-certified ethos, but at the same time they are reaching for some other epoch's dilemmas and glamours that have been pronounced obsolete by the propagandists of the modern "freedoms." It would be fatuous to claim that the military-school neighborhoods were populated by wide-eyed ingénues: in 1930's movies of the same genre, there were "good" girls and "bad" girls, and the labels—regardless of their superficiality—were, in both cases, departure points for interesting treatises on phoniness and experience. To pretend that a "quickie" is—in any way—a means to reach the altar involves quite another kind of humbug; it may pass for sophistication in *Mademoiselle,* but it is purely spurious in real life—even among liberated or dull-witted cadets. The "good" girls from more conventional times may not actually have been good, but they knew what they wanted and how to get it—with time-honored chastity games and prescribed doses of innocence, all according to circumstances and well-established priorities. This included a lot of old-fashioned hypocrisy and a gamut of nuances ranging from guilelessness to fakery, but the more we progress toward sexual amorphousness the more we miss the refined hypocrisy that regulated amatory malaises. "Don't sit under the apple tree with anyone else but me" would be the wrong anthem for today, and it was hardly a trustworthy picture of life even at the time of World War II—but soldiers died in defense of that contrived imagery. What the future Navy pilots of *An Officer and a Gentleman* are supposed to die for is hard to figure out. For a one-night stand?

—*Eric Shapearo*

MUSIC

Records: Jazz Survivors and Others

by Doug Ramsey

Since the recent deaths of Thelonious Monk, Sonny Stitt, Art Pepper, Cal Tjader, Wingy Manone, Sonny Greer, and Gabor Szabo, the title of Milt Jackson's new recording, "Ain't But A Few Of Us Left" (Pablo 2310-873), has taken on a disturbing ring. Mournfulness, however, does not characterize this music. With pianist Oscar Peterson, bassist Ray Brown, and drummer Grady Tate, Jackson's vibraharp provides music that rings with affirmation. Even the ballads "Body and Soul" and "If I Should Lose You" are given swinging, medium-tempo treatments. Though "A Time For Love" is played closer to conventional ballad speed, the performance is seized by Jackson and friends as an occasion for further joy.

Since his emergence from the Modern Jazz Quartet when it disbanded several years ago, Jackson has concentrated on dispensing what he describes as "my own kind of music—plain, straight, swingin' jazz or bebop or whatever you want to call it." His approach to Coleman Hawkins's classic "Stuffy" illustrates the modus operandi: a forthright setting of the tempo by the protean Peterson in an unaccompanied introduction, a vigorous unison exposition by Peterson and Jackson of the riff-laden melody, then several choruses of unremitting swing and invention, with solos from everyone but Tate, a drummer who finds it unnecessary to solo to make his points.

Norman Granz, who owns Pablo, is committed to recording the jazz artists he considers most valuable. His track record over more than thirty years is virtually impeccable. Granz believes that Oscar Peterson is an enormously important musician, and he records Peterson on a regular basis, both in concert and in the studio. The Pablo catalogue lists over 20 albums for Peterson, and he appears on many more with other artists. Each Peterson album is rich with the essential elements of jazz—unflagging swing, productive interplay among the instruments and superior melodic invention. In "Skol" (Pablo Live 2308-232), Peterson and his trio are joined by violinist Stephane Grappelli in concert at Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen. The 74-year-old Grappelli is superb in "Nuages," the haunting ballad by Django Reinhardt, with whom Grappelli starred nearly fifty years ago in the Quintet of the Hot Club of France. Peterson's unaccompanied solo is in the Tatum tradition, lovely because of the pyrotechnics, not in spite of them. "Skol Blues" is a prime example of the kind of rolling blues-playing that develops when Peterson is at the helm of any aggregation. "Live at the Northsea Jazz Festival" (Pablo Live 2620-115) includes the same musicians, with harmonica virtuoso Toots Thielemans replacing Grappelli. I can think of no better introduction to Thielemans than his wizardry on "Straight, No Chaser."

Peterson, Ray Brown, guitarist Joe Pass, and drummer Bobby Durham serve primarily as accompanists in "The Alternative Blues" (Pablo Today 2312-136). The beneficiaries of their efforts are trumpeters Dizzy Gillespie, Clark Terry, and Freddie Hubbard. In addition to several slow blues, there is a "Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams" in which Hubbard shines. Hubbard's work throughout this album is gratifying to

Mr. Ramsey is a frequent contributor to the Chronicles.

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one who has suffered with him through the permutations of crossover, fusion, and quasi-rock to which he subjected himself in a 10-year quest for commercial stardom.

Chuck Mangione should be, but is probably not, ashamed of himself. Mangione betrays himself by letting glimpses of his true leanings creep into his playing. In "Steppin' Out" (from "Love Notes," Columbia FC 38101) there are some genuinely hip flugelhorn phrases, expressed with perfect rhythm and inflection, harking back to his early Riverside albums of the 60's and the vestiges of creativity remaining on his Mercury LP's of the 70's. These bright spots, however, only illuminate the paucity of ideas in the album. One night in 1974, at New York's Half Note, I heard the Mangione band that included the saxophonist Gerry Niewood drop all the pop trappings and, for one set, define the state of jazz in the mid-70's with some of the most intense and inventive improvisation I had heard in New York in years. The "Love and Peace" ethos that took over and informed his music shortly thereafter rendered Mangione the Percy Faith of jazz. And so he remains. The "Love Notes" album performs the function that Faith's music performed in the 1950's for elevators and dentists' waiting rooms.

Columbia, however, is a house of many chambers. As if against the will of the accounting department, reissues and withheld first issues of important music flow out of the Black Rock, CBS headquarters. In the most recent batch, the hitherto buried remainders of the Art Blakey Jazz Messengers date of the Spring of 1956 shimmer like unearthed treasures. The session that produced "Nica's Dream" and "The End Of A Love Affair" turns out to have created four more performances, which have the same unity and boiling urgency as their companion pieces. Hank Mobley's tenor saxophone and Donald Byrd's trumpet blend with a richness achieved by few two-horn front lines.

Pianist Horace Silver was also a naïf, but the foundations for his later successful complexity are evident. Blakey, the quintessential drummer-leader, is the personification of swing. His thunderous accents and light goadings behind the soloists on "Carol's Interlude" summarize his style. And Doug Watkins, an honest, plain, swinging bassist, was always in tune. On side two, the revelation is Ira Sullivan, one of the few white musicians to work with Blakey (Chuck Mangione was another). Sullivan's tenor saxophone intonation and his perfect time were accompanied by an imagination that led him to a perfect expression of the balance between control and abandon that has characterized the best of Blakey's bands.

"Roy" (Columbia C2-38033) is Roy Eldridge, the trumpeter whose nickname, "Little Jazz" gets the size wrong. Despite the antiquated simplicity of the arrangements, the seven recordings of the 1937 Eldridge band support some astounding trumpet playing. In the four pieces recorded with Mildred Bailey's short-lived nine piece band, Eldridge found himself in the midst of sophisticated arrangements by Eddie Sauter. Teddy Wilson's piano enlivened the action, as did Sauter's reed voicings, and Roy floated on the pneumatic rhythm sounding more like Bunny Berrigan than himself. The unleashing was to come: Eldridge joined Gene Krupa, and their recordings of the early 1940's are among the monuments of the era. "Roy" offers previously unissued alternate masters of "Green Eyes," "Let Me Off Uptown," "After You've Gone," "Rockin' Chair," and several other Krupa/Eldridge experiments in arson. In each case, the Eldridge solos on the original issues were superior, but only marginally so. His heat and drive were consistent in all versions, and his celebrated refusal to play a solo the same way twice gives us distinctly different creations in the alternate takes. Krupa's band is rarely mentioned in discussions of the great swing groups. This collection reminds us that it was one of the hottest big bands of the 40's and that Anita O'Day was a vocalist of the highest charm and distinction.

Columbia has issued for the first time eight Ornette Coleman recordings from 1971 and '72. "Broken Shadows" (Columbia FC 38029) is such important music that one must simultaneously deplore its being kept buried for a decade and rejoice at its unexpected appearance. Coleman is neither the Grandma Moses nor the Jackson Pollock of modern jazz. He is made up equally of traditional and innovative parts, and if after nearly a quarter of a century of his music he still is often dismissed as either primitive or iconoclastic, it merely means that many people listen to music with closed minds. In this album there is a perfect introduction to Coleman's music in "Country Town Blues" by the reunited quartet that in 1959 disrupted and ultimately changed the course of the development of jazz. Coleman's alto saxophone and Don Cherry's trumpet execute a typically jagged Coleman melodic line while Charlie Haden and Billy Higgins on bass and drums keep time more or less conventionally. In the solo sections, there is amazing empathy among the four players as they develop an engaging off-center swing and the horns explore the possibilities of freedom within the harmonic and melodic bounds expanded, but not broken, by Coleman. This is Coleman's music in its most accessible form.

"Thelonious Monk Live At The It Club" (Columbia C2-38030) is the last of Monk's quartets in a superior live performance notable for the inclusion of several of the pianist-composer's least known works, among them "Gallop's Gallop" and "Nutty."

Gerry Mulligan's "Night Lights" (Phillips EXPR 1037) features one of the baritone saxophonist's best bands, a 1963 sextet including guitarist Jim Hall, trumpeter Art Farmer, and trombonist Bob Brookmeyer. The title tune and Mulligan's adaptation of Chopin's "Prelude in E Minor" are recordings both reflective and lyrical at the same time.

Clifford Brown/Max Roach: (EmArcy

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EXPR 1033) is a Japanese reissue of important American music, imported by Polygram. These are the 1955 recordings that introduced Brown to a wider audience that was amazed by the warmth and virtuosity of his trumpet playing.

The Tommy Dorsey/Frank Sinatra Sessions, Volumes 1, 2, and 3 (RCA CPL2-4334, 4335, 4336) include on six LP's everything Sinatra recorded with Dorsey from 1940 to 1942. There are 83 songs of varying quality, each invested with the young Sinatra's outstanding intonation, phrasing, diction, control and interpretation. It's a sort of "Well-Tempered Clavier" for popular singers to study and attempt to master, and for the rest of us to marvel at and enjoy.

Cal Tjader/Carmen McRae: "Heat Wave" (Concord CJ-189) provides the late vibraharpist and his Latin band backing one of the prima jazz singers, whose voice in her maturity has become a deep well of expressiveness.

In Pepper Adams's "Urban Dreams" (Palo Alto PA 8009), his sound has become so huge and incisive that it threatens to explode his baritone saxophone. He plays with a ferocity of attack that would be intimidating if it weren't for his remarkable gifts of swing and humor. "Three Little Words" and "Pent Up House" in Adams's hands are living textbooks of the intelligent uses of musical quotes. The rhythm section of pianist Jimmy Rowles, bassist George Mraz and drummer Billy Hart deserves an award for Best Supporting Cast. Palo Alto is a new label, and with this album and alto saxophonist Lanny Morgan's "It's About Time" (Palo Alto PA 8007), it is off to an impressive start.

Dave Brubeck/Paul Desmond (Fantasy F-24727) has some of the best of Brubeck's early quartet recordings, as well as brilliant alto saxophone playing by Desmond.

Dave Brubeck's "Paper Moon" (Concord CJ-178) is his best in recent years, with remarkable piano playing along the more lyrical lines he has been exploring. Tenor saxophonist Jerry Bergonzi's adaptation of the John Coltrane style is a success beyond mere imitation. □

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Never-Forgotten Passions

by Henry L. Mason III

One of the reasons why the German atrocities committed during World War I have not long since been placed in historical context is the incorrigible brutality of Germany's "defenders." A perfect example is Paul Gottfried's review of Barbara Tuchman's *Practicing History,* a diatribe which would more appropriately have been written for the *Völkischer Beobachter* in about 1936 than for *Chronicles of Culture* in 1982. Gottfried informs us that the Lusitania was "carrying contraband arms" to England. That was *not* the reason for the German attack, which was launched without the slightest regard for international law. What made the attack an atrocity was not the *fact* of the sinking but the *manner* in which it was carried out. It was well settled under international law that belligerent merchantmen—*whether or not* carrying "contraband—could only be attacked or sunk after (1) challenge, (2) search and (3) proper consideration for the passengers and crew. See, e.g. *The Lusitania,* 251 Fed. 715 (S.D.N.Y. 1968). This principle was admitted by the German government both before and after the attack. Thus, the German proclamation of a "war zone" around the British Isles on February 4, 1915, stated that:

> [E]very enemy merchant ship found in the said war zone will be destroyed *without its being always possible to avert the dangers threatening the crews and passengers on that account.*

By this statement the only limitation placed by the Germans on their duty to "avert the dangers" to crews and passengers was "impossibility." And although impossibility might have been successfully argued if the *Lusitania* had been traveling in convoy or if warships had been traveling in the vicinity, she was in fact unescorted, and even rescue vessels did not reach her until several hours after she sank.

In addition, almost a year *after* the sinking the German government *again* acknowledged that international law prohibited the sinking of merchant vessels without warning and without saving life:

> *In accordance with the general principles* of visit and search and destruction of merchant vessels *recognized by international law, such vessels,* both within and without the area declared as a naval war zone, *shall not be sunk without warning and without saving human lives, unless these ships attempt to escape or offer resistance.** (Emphasis added)

Despite these official and repeated admissions, the German government not only showered congratulations on Kapitänleutnant Schwieger for his "achievement" in killing almost 1,200 noncombatants, but even struck a medal boasting of the illegal attack.

Gottfried's more general defense of German submarine warfare is wrong for the same reason. It was not submarine warfare *per se* which aroused American indignation, but Germany's continued

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*Official communication by German Foreign Office to Ambassador Gerard, May 4, 1916.

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defiance of international law. The reassertion of unrestricted submarine warfare in January, 1917, as well as the publication of the Zimmerman telegram, made war with the United States inevitable.

Gottfried's errors about the *Lusitania,* however, are almost insignificant when compared with his discussion of the German army's conduct in Belgium. Contrary to his assertion that Tuchman does not "inquire" into the "circumstances" surrounding the Belgian gravestone inscription *"fusillé par les Allemands,"* she devotes an entire chapter of *The Guns of August* to precisely that. The results of Tuchman's well-documented inquiry give no comfort to Gottfried's position. Among a great many other acts of savagery, no less than 384 citizens of the Belgian town of Tamines were executed by firing squad and were buried under the inscription quoted by Tuchman. Not even the *Germans* claimed that these victims were "snipers and guerrillas," and nothing in the German policy of terror (which included the taking of innocent men and women as "hostages" and the destruction of homes and public buildings) limited reprisals to actual combatants.

Furthermore, Gottfried reasserts in particularly savage form the ludicrous German justifications for *Schrecklichkeit.* He claims that Tuchman "fails to note":

> that the Belgians would not have been forced to resist [*sic*] the Germans in 1914 if they had willingly allowed them to pass through their country when war broke out between Germany and France.

Continuing his fantastic argument, Gottfried claims that:

> by refusing this request when the Germans were in desperate military straits, the Belgians invited [*sic*] the ensuing retribution [*sic*].

In the first place, the Germans were hardly in "desperate straits." The German army was conducting an *offensive* which ultimately would be halted only on the Marne. England was not even in the war as yet, and the German view of the Belgians was that they were "poor fools" who did not have sufficient sense to "get out of the way of the steamroller." Furthermore, even if the German military position had been "desperate," that fact could hardly have justified "retribution" against the Belgians. Germany was in a state of war with *France,* and was attempting to sideswipe its enemy by illegally utilizing the territory of a neutral. Whatever strategic sense the Schlieffen plan for assault through Belgium may have contained, it had no legal justification. It was the German invasion which invited "retribution," and *not* the Belgian resistance.

Gottfried next attempts to justify German atrocities by the weird assertion that Anglo-French "conversations" conducted five years earlier included contemplation of the occupation of Belgium in the event of war with Germany, and by equating Allied "intent" with German "action." Neither side, he claims, showed "proper respect" for Belgian "national independence." Even assuming the truth of Gottfried's assertions, the *intent* of the British and French has nothing whatever to do with German reprisals against the *Belgians,* who were fully entitled to treat their own national independence with proper "respect." They did so by gallantly opposing the German juggernaut, and the Germans responded with a policy of deliberate and calculated terror. That the execution of this policy may not have been quite as bestial as wartime propaganda suggested does not excuse or mitigate it in the slightest.

Gottfried also states that German "behavior" toward Nurse Cavell was "ungallant to say the least." As a euphemism for execution, the phrase "ungallant behavior" ranks with "Einsatzgruppen" as an abuse of the language. In addition, if the Germans had "reason to suspect" that Cavell was a "spy," it is strange that they did *not* charge her with espionage; Cavell was in fact *shot* for nothing more than sheltering French, British and Belgian military personnel from German occupation forces in Belgium. Gottfried's purported parallel with Mata Hari is therefore completely irrelevant.

Gottfried's indictment of Tuchman as a fanatic Teutonophobe is as false as his defense of the Kaiser's armed forces. It is only necessary to read *Practicing History* (particularly the approximately ten sentences on pages 43-44 and 162-163 which contain the references to which Gottfried objects), to laugh at the notion that Tuchman hates Germans with "almost erotic intensity."

Finally, it is ironic that while there *are* valid distinctions between the policies of the German government in World War I and the pathological frenzies of the nazis, Gottfried's short article does more to blur them than a five-foot shelf of books by Tuchman. □

Dr. Gottfried Replies:

Having read Mr. Mason's attack on my comments regarding Barbara Tuchman, I take it as yet another expression of the persistent Teutonophobia among modern intellectuals. Mr. Mason, too, is implacable on the German question. Although I urge historical understanding for America's role in World War I and never suggest that Germany complied with international law, Mr. Mason calls me a defender of German "brutality." He links my views to those printed in nazi hate rags and leaves the reader to draw the desired conclusion. Let Mr. Mason be assured that as the descendent of an Austrian-Jewish refugee family (which proudly served the Central Powers during the Great War), I have nothing but loathing for Hitler's regime. Indeed I will match my record with his as a consistent opponent of all totalitarianism, nazi, communist, or Third World. As for the source of my views on the mat-

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ter at hand, I have not read the *Völkischer Beobachter,* but I assume that Mr. Mason has. My own views on the war were drawn from Gerhard Ritter, Golo Mann, and William Langer, all bona fide anti-nazis.

Undoubtedly German submarines often failed, before attacking, to alert vessels from neutral countries that carried supplies to their enemies. But there was no way that German submarines could respect international law without betraying their position in a sea dominated by England. Germany's controversial maritime strategy, which was passionately debated in the *Reichstag* before being adopted as a desperate measure, was aimed at relieving a destructive English blockade. The relief of that blockade was a life-and-death matter to the German people, as well as to their government, although, as Mr. Mason observes, the problem could have been easily solved by sending German soldiers back to hungry cities at the small price of surrendering to the enemy. By the way, the English, with fewer mitigating circumstances, torpedoed, without warning, those ships that entered the Dardanelles to trade with Turkey.

I am sorry that Mr. Mason misunderstands my comments about Edith Cavell. She was an English patriot who, naturally, gave the Germans grounds for suspicion. Nonetheless, her execution, an expression of wartime hysteria, stands out as a deplorable act. It was in fact almost as lamentable as some of the practices then embraced by the French government, which protected the assassin of Jean Jaure, an insufficiently Teutonophobic socialist deputy, and jailed cabinet officials who were alleged to favor a negotiated peace. Nor does the American record on civil liberties look any better for this period. Even before America's entry into the war, the Wilson government filtered international news through a Department of Information and fomented anti-German hysteria that resulted in both physical violence and the destruction of property.

The German invasion of Belgium seems an issue in search of a historical context. German armies entered Belgium in August 1914 to fight a war against France. Confronted by what they considered a state of wartime crisis at the end of July and the necessity to fight on two fronts, the Germans tried to overwhelm France, partly by moving armies through Belgium, before Russia could overrun Germany from the east. The point at issue here is not the soundness of the German strategy: the Germans, by jumping the gun, put themselves in an awkward legal situation while implementing a military plan that was probably unworkable in 1914. The question is whether the Belgians—in view of Germany's announced intention at the outset of the struggle—should have resisted at all. Being in no position to repulse the Germans who, unlike the French, showed no prewar annexationist interest in their land, the Belgians might have done best to let the German armies pass. Their decision to fight the Germans, in any case, had disastrous consequences. By helping to thwart German military planning in the west and by engaging in guerrilla operations against German troops, the Belgians exposed themselves to understandable German anger and frustration. That they chose this role may indicate how they viewed their national honor. That Germans saw the matter differently may be explained without pointing to incipient Hitlerism. As for the Belgian graves marked *"fusillé par les Allemands,"* I assume that Mr. Mason has researched the matter at least as well as Mrs. Tuchman. □

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter from Paris: Mitterrand's France

by Thomas Molnar

Since I have never traveled behind the Iron Curtain, I can only compare Mitterrand's France with socialist Burma, where Dictator-General Ne Win's heavy hand lies heavily even on tourists. France is not yet a Soviet-style state, but a few verbal snapshots can provide a picture of developments in summer 1982, after twelve months of the present regime.

The setting is in a new building, the office of a leftist-Catholic professor-editor. He has just finished writing his third semiclandestine *(samizdat?)* "letter to friends," calling on them to resist the ideologues who are demolishing the country economically and culturally. "In this office," he remarks with a wry smile, "we may still speak openly; as far as I know, the walls have no microphones."

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At France's border with Switzerland many travelers are stripped and searched in order to stop their fleeing francs from reaching the safe-deposit boxes of Swiss banks. Address books are photocopied by customs officials, later checked for names of friends whose monies you *may be* helping escape. A matchbox bearing the name of a Zurich bank can make one a suspect. Not only are the smaller fortunes fleeing (the big ones escape more officially as "transfers" or "investments"), but new investments—by Arabs, Japanese, Germans— are not forthcoming. One year's socialist-communist management has sufficed to make France's economic future bleak. I talked with young, enterprising businessmen, lawyers, scientists, all of whom contemplate emigration and spend their days devising ways and means to do so. Perhaps Mitterrand believed Pol Pot when he claimed that people are expendable and that one million hard commu-

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nist Cambodians are enough for the country's future. During the summer, 2000 gendarmes spread through France, checking for conformity to the postfreeze price of butter and eggs. Meanwhile, the minister of justice freed thousands of criminals after abolishing, through parliamentary majority, his predecessor's semitough law on security. Industries—the ones not yet bankrupt—are working halftime, while hopelessly struggling against worker demands encouraged by the government. Unemployment has risen beyond two million, and the number of those out of work continues to rise. Some expect that the communists might wait for more bitterness, then organize the unemployed into "worker-militias."

Is "communism" indeed Mitterrand's objective? He is known to be strongly against it. A close friend of his whom I queried said that the first adjective coming to his mind describing Mitterrand is *opportunist*. There may be no contradiction here; the four communists in the cabinet can scarcely do more damage than some of the socialist hierarchs, who are more Marxist than Marx. The whole picture recalls the Allende regime in Chile: fanatic, incompetent socialists trying to prove to their communist colleagues that Muscovite obedience is stifling—whereas socialists bring new techniques and strategies to the pink international. While Mitterrand is increasingly Buddha-like in his inscrutability, his minister of industry and technology, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, a man 20 years younger, emerges as the chief activist and ideologue. Again: is Chevènement a Marxist? The term is irrelevant, since "we are all Marxists now" and Chevènement represents simply a new, perhaps already international, Marxian activist model. Some 12 years ago, it is said, he wavered between leftish Gaullism and socialism; since then, he has fused the two and combined that explosive mixture with the utopian socialism (Engels *dixit*) of the French 1840's—Comte, Proudhon, but particularly Fourier. Chevènement's avowed goal—which he admits only in private—is a monolithic France, frugal and efficient, a model for the Third World. He brings to mind St. Just, the fiery young orator of the Revolution who narrowly missed stepping into Robespierre's shoes. Chevènement, whose ambition is limitless, regards himself as a stricter, less literary Mitterrand—and as a future president.

I love France, so I should not be suspected of deliberately painting a dark picture of the country. Voltaire's observation that "every man has two countries, his own and France" certainly applies to me. Thus I may close one eye when socialist leaders Quiles and Mermaz (the latter the speaker of the National Assembly) threaten the opposition with the line "heads will roll," or when *moderate* minister of economics Jacques Delors calls the opposition spokesmen "fascist loudmouths." But I am less tolerant with minister of culture Jack Lang, who ordered that on June 21, 22 and 23 (the summer solstice) France be turned over to "music and fun," with the result that screeching noise filled every arrondissement in Paris, and amateurish clowns stopped pedestrians at every corner. This is the socialist notion of "people's culture," while at the same time serious journalists—if they are critical of public policy—are denied newsprint, and television airs pornography and propaganda—or hour-long analyses of Mitterrand's books. To an unprejudiced eye, the officialization of fun has saturated France with a mood which is obviously morose. The abuses continue: unannounced strikes block vacationers at airports, company executives are sequestered in their offices, an old chateau is burned down by protesting workers. And the regime that once promised paradise now is already shopworn, fighting ridicule with threats instead of positive measures or competence. Even the small bourgeoisie—the country's backbone ever since the peasantry drastically diminished in numbers—is up in arms. But, unlike the summer of 1789, their anger is turned *against* the left, supposedly their official representative. From rich man to café waiter, they all exclaim: *"Monsieur, cela ne va plus du tout, cela ne peut pas continuer!"* What do they foresee? It is expected that the March 1983 municipal elections will clearly signify that the nation has had its fill of demagogic promises and catastrophic results. The regime is trying to meet this challenge by redistricting, most notably by fragmenting Paris (which, for a change, is now in an *anti*-revolutionary mood) into 20 independent—and socialist—fiefdoms. But the mayor of Paris, Jacques Chirac, is head of the opposition and a popular man. He asked the obvious question: why not divide Marseilles, too? The mayor of Marseilles is E. Deferre, minister of interior; the issue was quickly shelved.

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Mitterrand came to power largely on the implied promise that his would be a "socialism with a human face," the slogan of the Prague Spring and of the later vogue of Eurocommunism. Those who voted for him in 1981 have had a rude awakening and have yet to digest communist participation in important ministries. My feeling is that if Mitterrand, even now, dismissed the four communist cabinet ministers, popular opinion would turn in his favor. Much of the fled capital might also return. It may be worthwhile, therefore, to speculate on Mitterrand's motives in keeping them on. He obviously regards himself as a leftist de Gaulle, heir to the policy of an alternative to both Moscow and Washington. When he nationalized banks and other enterprises, he reasoned that "in the world of multinationals the government must watch over the country's sovereignty." Next comes Mitterrand's conviction that France has for too long been a bourgeois country, and must regain a position of leadership among those who look toward a new revolution. This accounts for its aid to and rhetoric about Nicaragua and the like. It should not be forgotten that de Gaulle, too, tried to awaken national consciousness—and a "third option"—from Phnom Penh to Quebec. There is a greater continuity of French policies than meets the eye.

The most frightening aspect of Mitterrand's France is its egalitarian impulse. Igor Shafarevich theorized that socialism is the symptom of a nation's tiredness. I think that is a dangerous half-truth. Egalitarianism is a passion of envy and brutal ambition: in the end, it manipulates and reduces society to a geometrical pattern. A socialist society is not peaceful and passive but restless and combative. Most of the people I talked with in France were either cynical regarding the future *("plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose")* or despairing. But there were others, too, new Jacobins with eyes ablaze at the prospects of drastic change. Chevènement is reputed to have suggested that all Frenchmen should think alike on issues of national and global import. His acolytes warn—so far, discreetly—intellectuals and professors that debates "in a critical vein," are not desirable. The consequence is, of course, that students spy on teachers, colleagues report colleagues, journalists, researchers and bankers look over their shoulders when talking, writing, deciding.

An often-heard adjective of Mitterrand's regime is "generous": a new and generous policy, a generous interpretation of the law, mistakes made out of generosity. Let us remember that while sending thousands to be "married to the guillotine," Robespierre had his mouth full of *virtue*. □

THE AMERICAN PROSCENIUM

The Realities of Power

Whenever a President—or, for that matter, any politician who operates within a democratic system of freedoms and responsibilities—has to renege on promises, compromise principles, renounce obligations, engage in deals with enemies, backpedal loudly proclaimed creedal slogans, resort to abstruse euphemism, abandon supporters, desert the trust and hope vested in him, tergiversate about once neatly formulated tenets and ideas, he invokes a shady, almost mystical, political vocabulary term: "the realities of power." Let's not be too slick and self-assured about these realities: they certainly do exist. Moreover, the gist of a well-functioning democracy is a well-tempered sense of compromise rigidly controlled by a sense of moral propriety that protects the state and society from slipping into venality, selfishness and corruption. This approach to democratic politics has always been called pragmatism and is considered by many to be a supreme virtue.

With his August 1982 address to the nation about the increases in taxes, it's obvious that President Reagan has, for the first time, invoked the awesome reconditeness of the realities-of-power formula. It has long been known that Mr. Reagan—who came into office as an ideologue committed to a tightly structured sociopolitical doctrine—has gradually fallen under the spell of some in the Republican Party's upper reaches who most mercifully may be called pragmatists. They have convinced him of two things: *primo*—that retaining power at *any* price is his mission; *segundo*—that he must shed the image of an ideologue, for ideology is tantamount to suicide within the ground rules of American politics.

It is with sadness that we have watched Mr. Reagan heed their pressures, opting for short-term shrewdness over a far-sighted vision of momentous, perhaps fundamental, change in American affairs. Yes, Mr. Reagan *was* an ideologue, or, at least, the personification of an ideological set of principles, and, to our mind, that was exactly what gave him victory. Ideology, in his case, meant a rationally and empirically assembled system of analyses and conclusions in political, economic, and social matters, whose ultimate goal was to reform, even restructure, the American reality—which, in the perception of many, had been deteriorating toward collapse year by year, from election to election. Actually, every politician is and must be an ideologist; they all are countless Monsieur Jourdains, speaking ideological prose unknowingly. Even the pragmatic operators who surround Mr. Reagan are ideologues—exponents of the ideology of unprincipled politics.

So President Reagan, like many before

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him, has buckled under the burden of the realities of power. He has resorted to euphemizing tax imposition as "revenue raising," and, in foreign policy, chose flashy, media-oriented successes instead of supporting probity. In the Middle East, he rescued the nerve center of the bestial political gangsterism that serves our most implacable enemy. To please the financial gougers in the West and East, he destroyed any possibility of American influence in Eastern Europe, and he still plays footsy with primitive—but awash in money—tribal monarchies who wish us ill. And in the Far East, he apparently prefers not to follow the good advice of those who know China better than the country-club mavens that rule the White House, and who know also that giving up too much earns nothing but profit for a couple of multinationals.

Which all leaves us pretty aggrieved.

Peace on Earth Without Heaven

Initiating crusades is nothing new for Catholic clergymen; they've been at it for almost a millennium. Their latest crusade, however, does not seem likely to redound to the glory of God. The city the Catholic clerics wish to conquer is no longer Jerusalem but Washington, and their enemy is no longer the infidel Saracen but rather the nuclear Minuteman. That priests should share in the widespread concern about the possibility of a nuclear war is understandable, as is their insistence that they have a right to voice opinions concerning American armament policies. What's disturbing is that many Catholic leaders represent as religious a political stand which clearly evinces a profound failure of faith.

Religion has always believed its primary concern to be redemption in eternity, not preservation in time. This is not to say that the faithful do not value human life highly and fervently decry its violent extinction. But mortal existence and temporal peace are relative, not absolute, goods in the pious mind: if the antinuclear Catholics are sincere in their creed they must allow that no believer should wish to cling to the earth any longer than it affords opportunities for worship and spiritual growth. Such an attitude does not imply any imposition on those who do value earthly existence above all else, but a true-to-himself cleric can hardly afford to ignore this basic Christian assumption. If he does, he serves neither God nor life but something else—something quite sinister to both.

Indeed, Western Christianity may be deeply grateful that the soldiers who defended the gates of Vienna against Moslem invaders in 1664 were not catechized by the sort of prelates who now agitate for American nuclear disarmament. Within their political gospel, physical destruction, not spiritual deprivation, apparently constitutes the ultimate evil. To hear them speak, one would suppose that the shadows cast by a Soviet ideology threatening the destruction of all extraterrestrial faith are not nearly so dark as those cast by the American missiles which keep that ideology at bay. One Catholic bishop has announced that he will refuse to pay half his federal income tax as a protest against the American manufacture of nuclear arms. (Considering that nuclear-arms production does not account for even a twentieth of the federal budget, this seems a rather generous withholding plan.) Another is publicly denouncing all those employed in making American nuclear arms as "sinners" and urging them to repent by seeking other employment in the midst of a recession, thereby demonstrating, rather inconsistently, an utter contempt for material concerns. Yet a third recently denounced Seattle's new nuclear submarine base as an "American Auschwitz." Even more marvelous than the mental contortions of these shepherds, however, was the declaration by a speaker at a recent Disarmament Conference sponsored by the Boston Archdiocese who averred that nothing—not liberty, not religion, not democracy—is precious enough to fight a nuclear war over. If *that* is not sufficiently clear, Lenin will dispel any lingering confusion: "As an ultimate objective peace simply means Communist world control."

Certainly, unilateral disarmament by America would bring peace—the peace of a spiritual cemetery. Religion would be put into an unmarked grave, together with freedom, justice, equality before the law, and habeas corpus. In a recent interview, Bishop Leroy Matthiesen explained the ecclesiastical preoccupation with antinuclear activism in these terms: "This is the politics of survival. It would be surprising for the Church not to say something." What he expects would survive under Pax Sovietica he did not make clear. (BC) □

JOURNALISM

Seven Wonders of the Corporate World

We wonder whether the General Motors PR and promotion executives have ever read publications in which they place their opulent ads that reek of corporate pecuniary sinfulness. In *The Nation*—the premier organ of anticorporate ideological convulsions—we found a lush General Motors spread that included a motto:

> General Motors
> The future of transportation is here

In all probability, what GM paid for that ad would finance two issues of *The Nation*. If General Motors' decision-

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makers were to delve into the pages of this lavishly supported publication, they would discover that most of its authors and ideologists anticipate no future for GM at all. The future they would like best is a nationalized GM whose former corporate leaders could sell pencils on Detroit sidewalks. □

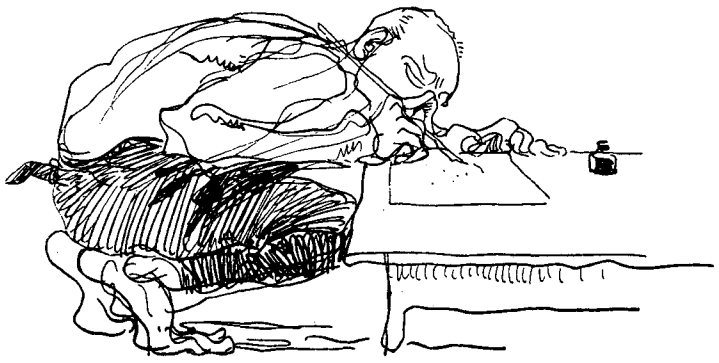
Guess Who's Trying to Come In?

In a recent lead editorial entitled "Who's Betraying Conservatism?" the *Chicago Tribune* announced, not for the first time, that those who are generally thought to represent the ideological opinions and principles of modern conservatism—the New Right, Moral Majority, supply-side economists, constitutional traditionalists, etc.—are not exactly bona fide conservatives. So who is? We can judge by these sentences:

> But if anybody is betraying the best of conservatism, it is those who have appointed themselves as custodians of true conservatism, declaring that it means whatever they happen to believe in.

The key words are "best of conservatism": those who know what the "best" is presumably *are* the "best," and if they have a huge printing facility at their disposal, they can easily declare themselves—you guessed it—conservatives. As conservatives of a lower quality than the *Trib's* editors, we should rejoice at the prospect that a big-city daily—even one with strong tabloidal tendencies—could be on our side. But let's look at some hard facts in the *Trib's* journalistic and publicistic record.

Politically, the *Trib* maintains a meandering course. Domestically, it scolds the unions and disparages capitalism almost evenhandedly, but it supported John Anderson for President, ERA, and most of the liberal social causes —not exactly conservative positions. In foreign policy it is tough on the Soviets and communism, but it has effusively warm sympathies for their proxies in the Middle East, Latin America and Africa. It is in the *Tribune's* political philosophy and cultural propensities, as they are reflected in its journalistic practice, that its claims to conservatism become either farce, or self-delusion, or—we hate to think so—an outright attempt at a self-promotional shell game. Near-fixtures on the Op-Ed page are features reprinted from the Institute for Policy Studies and its syndicated outlets—that is, from those lovely people who overtly promote the dogma of the World Peace Congress (the Kremlin's official oracle on the nuclear-armament issue), "liberation" movements in El Salvador or Namibia, or Cuba's purity of intentions. All this is possible thanks to the First Amendment, to which the *Trib* swears unswerving allegiance, at the same time meticulously eliminating the nonliberal and antiradical views. Over the last five years, we've never seen on that page a reprint from *National Review* or *Modern Age,* both of which are known for their deep distrust of opinions that come from IPS, Moscow, *Mother Jones,* Havana, or the Pacific News Service.



It is in the realm of culture where the *Trib's* "conservatism" turns into either enigma or caricature. Over the same five years, we have seen in its pages serialized excerpts from *Midnight Express,* a book that makes a drug-pusher into a role model and moral hero, and *Thy Neighbor's Wife,* an opus that fervidly advocates complete sexual anarchy and nihilism as answers to our personal malaises. We have read *Tribune* "critics" who admitted their wholehearted support of the "new" permissiveness in the movies; we have seen paeans to Angela Davis, the communist operative, and Jane Fonda, Hanoi's ally in the Vietnam War, labeling them "forces of good" in our society.

Quite the Michigan Avenue conservatives. And trustworthy semanticists. □

Don't Be Impertinent, Young Man

The movie reviewer of *New York* magazine, the organ of those who think they know better by mere dint of their properly sooty bathrooms, writes about *An Officer and a Gentleman*—a movie with good intentions but meager results:

> Screenwriter Douglas Day Stewart must think that we're longing not only for the narrative strength of old movies but also for the reassuring moral universe Hollywood showed us 40 years ago.

Speak in your own name, mister. A large, though seldom vocal, majority of Americans longs for a reassuring moral universe. Sometimes they even win elections, install a President in whom they vest fond hopes, and change the political landscape. Their voices are banned from magazines like *New York,* but they are far from nonexistent. □

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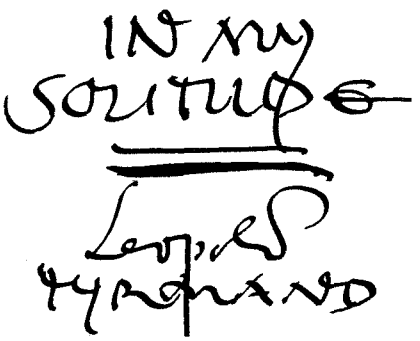
Here I am, perhaps not isolated in this feeling, but neither am I palpably bolstered by the sight of someone likeminded in this parched desert of conformity. As I see it, the *Village Voice,* a New York weekly publication, is the incarnation of evil. Not the refined sin that has the power to fascinate; nor the miserable vice that might be rescued through broadmindedness and compassion; nor even that brutal wickedness that inspires noble outrage. The *VV's* kind of evil is disgusting and contemptible, an accumulation of iniquitous proclivities in politics and tastes that makes one wince at having to defile one's shoe in order to push it aside. William Blake wrote about how "to see the earth in the grain of sand/Heaven in a wildflower . . ." The *VV* people see the universe in a drop of sperm; any means to promote this vision as the ultimate in human aspirations their editorial offices pursue as a sacred mission, and they saturate their efforts with an idiosyncratic brand of fanaticism and intolerance. In short, insofar as one can summarize an obese issue of *VV,* it is a journal in which British apologists and exegetes for Arafat, or discreet pro-Khadafy propagandists, preach the moral arguments of updated Bolshevism. It is the *Pravda* of the American behavioral left, dedicated to covering this land with the slime of incoherent instincts presented as *joie de vivre,* to drowning it in coquettishly perfumed sludge of incommodious human secretions. It is a Bill of Rights for any imaginable sexual deviation and debasement, the holy writ of post-Marcusian casuists and postsituational-ethics sophists whose only quest is to divest the American middle class from its last remnants of civilized urbanity and quickly peddle this striptease to their radic-bourgeois clientele. It's the conceptual organ for muckrakers of bodily and mental effluvia, for deodorized Neanderthals who, together with the cynical claqueurs for international communism (they occasionally snub the Soviets to flaunt the sophistication of their political emotions) are deadly determined to turn this country into an institutional tyranny of specious ideas and smelly propensities. Their ideological vapors pollute the intelligentsia's collective mind more insidiously than anything that ever oozed out of Love Canal. If I were ever to abandon for a moment my innate addiction to poise and restraint, I would say that the paper stinks.

The *Village Voice* is owned by a



cosmopolitan press tycoon who, I read, considers and describes himself as a conservative.

Now, I, like everyone else, am a composite of two selves which have long been in fierce conflict. Half of me is tormented by the question: How could anyone animated by a conservative impulse not feel guilt for selling such detriment to a society still clinging to the vestiges of a civilizational order? Is it his belief in diversity, in seminal differences, in latitude for even the most noxious view, that makes him tick? Is it the conservative tradition of forbearance that prevents him from influencing the national psyche in keeping with his own principles? Is the gentleman who retains *Village Voice* actually a genteel and delicate pluralist who knows that equity is a conservative value, the glory of his persuasion, and that granting unconditional editorial freedom is an expression of faith in fairness?

Yet the other side of me, that part of me that's small and narrowminded, corruptible, misanthropic, secular, irascible, peevish, reactionary, and vilely ungenerous with other people's merits, keeps telling me that scummy impurity of body and mind is what sells best in today's journalistic market. It says that the hottest merchandise appeals to the low pleasures of derangement, especially when it is expertly blended with base, shrill, radical leftism featured as tender social conscience. And that the anarchy of inclinations and standards is the most profitable commodity in the midst of the American affluence that was achieved by appeals diametrically opposed to those of the *Village Voice*—namely to civic and moral virtues.

I must admit that my ignoble self wins, hands down. Not long ago, a text was made public in the *Voice* which proved that some conservative illusions belong to history's dustbin. It came to the fore in an open letter from some of the *Village Voice's* doctrinal storm troopers (who considered themselves underpaid for their chores, demanded cushier benefits, and considered a strike) which stated *urbi et orbi:*

> The editorial freedom enjoyed by *Voice* writers is not granted by Murdoch as a reward for the docility of his staff. Murdoch has a keen enough business sense to know that the readers who provide his substantial profits would be less than receptive to anti-abortion diatribes or articles supporting increases in military spending. Strike or not strike, editorial freedom at the *Voice* continues to be a lucrative proposition for its owner.

Mr. Murdoch is, of course, the *Village Voice's* proprietor. He also owns the *New York Post, New York* magazine and the *Times* of London. So varied a motley of publishing ventures and stances in both America and England seems not to ruin his sleep—he's an Australian. He is also a businessman, a capitalist and a prim citizen, according to the gossip columns. I wonder what the word "pluralism" brings to his mind—the opposite of a *single* dollar? And why is he called conservative? "There won't be an answer . . ." as they used to announce in old melodramas when someone's respectability was being pondered.

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